

SMITH'S

NOV. 1917

5 CENTS MAGAZINE

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Vol. XXVI

No. 2

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 26

NOVEMBER, 1917

Number 2

The Footpath Way

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "Out of the Storm," "The Lady of Rocca Pirenza," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

The story of a business man and a business woman—the drama of their love, marriage, estrangement—a big vital tale of the world of to-day. This new serial will run through four numbers of SMITH'S.

CHAPTER I.

THE girl from the reception room, limp, shabby, and quite palpably adoring, invaded the luxurious sanctities of Miss Hines' private office, a card in one hand, the other furtively busy seeking to establish friendly relations between her shirt waist and skirt.

Beatrice Hines looked at her with the expression that did duty for a frown without marring the smoothness of her forehead, bland and beautiful beneath sleek bands of midnight hair.

"How often must I tell you, Flora," she demanded, taking the bit of paste-board, "that unmanicured fingers are inferior to Georgian trays, of which we have several, for the carrying of cards?"

Flora, flushing miserably at the rebuke, looked from her employer to her employer's guest, straight and stalwart in a wing chair covered with a wonderful English chintz. The caller's eyes were kind and sympathetically amused; they seemed to say: "I understand as well as you that it's all a manner. She

doesn't mean a word of it." The girl took heart of grace from the smiling regard and murmured something about forgetting and being sorry. Meantime, Beatrice, after a casual glance at the card, tossed it over to Janet Fowler in the big chair.

"There he is now," she said. And again she addressed her slave: "Is Mrs. Creamer with Mr. Creamer?"

"No'm—no, Miss Hines."

"Very well. Tell him I'm engaged at present, but that I shall be at liberty in half an hour. If he cares to wait here, see that he has magazines and cigarettes."

"Yes'm—yes, Miss Hines," murmured Flora, striving again to correct a too servile form of address.

Beatrice watched her as she made her awkward way between a chintz-covered davenport and a pillar of yellowed marble, upon which stood a great bowl of goldfish. There was annoyance in her eyes more marked than a furrow between the brows.

"Close the door after you, Flora. Will you kindly tell me," she added,

turning to her cousin, "why I tolerate that lummock of a thing in my employ?"

"Is it a riddle?" asked Janet.

"It's a problem to me. I, who love beauty, who love finish, who simply must have charm—I, to have an office girl who looks like the slavey out of a Dickens novel!"

"She obviously adores you. Perhaps that's the reason."

"They all obviously adore me—at first," retorted Beatrice, contemptuous of adoration.

"Then perhaps it's because you get her cheaper than a more ornamental sort of office girl. Or because you owe her wages and can't get rid of her. That's the reason mother used to give for putting up with awful servants."

"After all, there is some common sense beneath all that idealistic junk with which you've cluttered up your brain, Janet! You're quite right—though very rude. She came for less than any other of the last batch of applicants for the position. And I do owe her money. Why are you getting up?"

"To make way for a customer—and Joel Creamer, at that!"

"Sit down again. Didn't you hear me tell Flora to say that I was engaged for half an hour?"

"Is that the way in which a hard-up decorator treats a multimillionaire? I assure you we shouldn't consider it good business in Berwicksbury!"

"It's the way in which this decorator treats that multimillionaire," replied Beatrice, with her effective little air of drawling impertinence.

She rose from behind the Jacobean table that served as her desk and looked at herself in a Florentine mirror on the wall behind it. Very deliberately, she drew from a vanity box of violet leather and gold tooling a stick of rouge, set in a gold holder, and with this she proceeded to add bril-

liance to her lips, already artificially ablaze in the clear pallor of her face.

"And let me tell you, my child, that the sooner Berwicksbury learns to treat multimillionaires after this fashion, the sooner Berwicksbury will find itself again upon the map. I mean to keep Mr. Joel Creamer waiting merely because he isn't used to it. He's got to recognize me as something different from a mere railroad magnate or the governor of a State!"

"What sort of man is he?" inquired Janet, according the accentuated insolence of her cousin the tribute of a faint smile.

"A stupid vulgarian, conceited, overbearing, mannerless. The sort of man who astonishes you by his amazing likeness to the stage caricatures of the objectionable, self-made rich. Until I met him, I thought those men simply the product of playwrights' imaginations. Now I know that they really exist. You know—the sort who look as if they might eat with their knives or drink the water from their finger bowls, like the *nouveaux* in the comic papers."

"Are you doing a house for him?"

"I'm going to do their new house. They've built an orphan asylum or jail or something in that architectural line on Fifth Avenue—just a little bit bigger and a little bit more expensive than the last millionaire's. And Chauncey Dederich, who built it for them, thought he was going to have the privilege of dictating the interior—and the interior decorations. But Chauncey has another think coming." She uttered the vulgarism delicately, like a cat masking its greed of cream with dainty lappings. "I, little Bee, busy little Bee, will do their house."

"What is she like?"

"Mrs. Creamer? Like an inarticulate washerwoman," answered Miss Hines, with her usual promptitude and her usual scorn. "Less objectionable than Joel, of course, because he hasn't



"How often must I tell you, Flora," she demanded, taking the bit of pasteboard, "that un-manicured fingers are inferior to Georgian trays, of which we have several, for the carrying of cards?"

allowed her to retain a particle of self-respect or of decent conceit or courage, and without those nobody can be thoroughly objectionable. But a dreadful person—ignorant, dowdy, tired out, hopeless, and afraid."

"Oh, Bee!" Janet Fowler's voice, half grieving, half indignant, trembled. "How I could hate a man like that! Do something to him, won't you?"

"I intend to," Beatrice promised briefly. "Though in reality she ought to have something done to her. I hate a subservient woman."

"So do I, of course. But, after all, not so bitterly as I hate the man who makes her subservient. You aren't going to let your husband do that to you, are you, Bee?"

"Don't call him my husband, child! It sounds so—so horribly fixed! I merely said that I was thinking of taking him on."

"You said that you were engaged."

"Hast never heard of a broken engagement in the sylvan fastnesses of Berwickshire?"

"Don't be ridiculous! And don't talk

as if you weren't as indigeneous to Berwickbury as I am—"

"My dear, I transplanted myself in due season. As for you, it would take those famous Long Island tree movers to get you uprooted now. And, anyhow, I don't regard an engagement less than twenty-four hours old as terribly binding."

"It's so funny," said Janet meditatively, her firm chin in the cup of her hand as she surveyed her cousin, "to think that you are engaged to the son of my boss. Dear old Mr. Deering—I wonder how he will like it."

"You will kindly not convey the information to dear old Mr. Deering," said Beatrice imperatively.

"My dear girl! Naturally I hadn't expected to forestall Mr. Deering's son with the family intelligence." Janet's tones took on an edge of haughtiness.

"Oh, forgive me, Jan. I didn't mean to impugn your perfectly unimpeachable good manners! But I'm half sorry I told you about my midnight madness of last night; and I'm half sorry for the madness itself; and—and, on the whole, that engagement may be returned to the store and a refund demanded. After all, as you suggest, there's something grotesque in my being engaged to old Mr. Deering's son. I can remember when he—the father, I mean—used to come to mend the palings around our yard or put up extra shelves in our pantry."

"I didn't mean that I thought it funny on account of any unsuitability," explained Janet, grave and a little stiff. "I don't. I merely mean that the coincidence was queer. As for unsuitability—it ought to be the Deerings who would complain of that, if there were complaining to be done. Don't you think so?"

"No, my dear Donna Quixota, I don't," replied Beatrice with considerable asperity. And then she added,

with quiet venom: "Though, of course, my feeling in regard to the matter would be somewhat different from yours."

The fresh color paled a little in Janet's smooth, firm cheeks, but her gray eyes met her cousin's steadily.

"I suppose that is so," she agreed calmly. "Your father was less to blame than mine. Though, really, none of our family came out any too well. However, we live in New England, and not in Kentucky, and the feud doesn't flourish among us, and I'm working for one of the men our parents injured, and you're going to marry his son—"

"If a late frost doesn't kill the Delaware peach crop," interjected Beatrice with an epigrammatic effect.

"All right! Have it your own way." Janet looked at the watch set in the leather strap around her wrist. "You've kept your millionaire waiting thirty-five minutes, Bee. It's tempting Providence. Remember—'Be bold, be bold, but not too bold!'"

"There's no such thing as being too bold when it's Beatrice Hines against Joel Creamer," replied the young woman with assurance. "Good-by, though, honey. Give my love to Aunt Miriam, and make another escape out of Berwickbury soon. It's done you good, this one."

They stood together for a minute, Janet Fowler's taller, broader figure, in its plainly tailored suit, looking out of place among the exotic furnishings of the office into which Beatrice Hines fitted so perfectly. The girl from Berwickbury marked it all with half amusement, half contempt—the screens of leather, the imported chintzes, the carved woods, the fire smoldering upon antique fire irons in the little grate, the Chinese bowls of flowers, the great crystal globe in which the goldfish gleamed.

Beatrice certainly belonged in the

room, from the top of her smooth, close-banded, shining black head to the tip of her gray suede pumps, with the liberal display of tightly drawn silk hosiery on the slim ankles above them. Her frock of lustrous black satin inclosed her slim, graceful figure as its calyx incloses a bud; and the frock's decorations of rude worsted embroidery in barbaric colors seemed impertinently to inform the world that to Bee the sumptuous fabric was but as linsey-woolsey. A pair of long earrings of greenish turquoise matrix dangled from her small, pink-tipped ears, and accentuated the whiteness of her slim neck. An odor of sandalwood fluttered when she rose, but whether it emanated from her garments, set astir, or from the air her motions made to vibrate, one could not say.

Her face, small and narrow, would have been unnoticed for beauty had she not used it so daringly—accentuating its narrowness by the black banding of her hair; accentuating its clear whiteness by the same foil and by the brilliant line of carmine which she painted upon her lips; accentuating the wicked gleam of her impudent eyes by a star of court-plaster pasted close to the corner of one of them. Janet, beside her, with her strength and her pink-and-white simplicity, seemed about as interesting as a bowl of clabber beside the wonderful concoction of a great chef. She herself recognized the fact with some amusement and considerable scorn, rather for her cousin's type, however, than for her own.

"If I stayed in New York long enough, Bee, do you think it might do me as much good as it's done you?"

"Oh, I couldn't hold out any such hope as that!" declared Bee with mock gravity.

And with a laugh and a perfunctory, cousinly kiss, the girls parted.

The suite of Beatrice Hines, Incorporated—Flora's predecessor, with one

share of the stock, and the "outside woman" formed the "Incorporated"—was rather spacious, and Janet traversed two rooms and a stretch of hall before she found Flora in the reception office, among candlesticks, fabric samples, painted tinware, garden seats, Venetian glass, and all the impedimenta of an ultra "smart" decorating establishment in that particular year of grace. To Flora she intimated that Miss Hines was at last disengaged, and she stole a look at the corpulent gentleman upon the Louis Quinze sofa to whom Flora immediately communicated the happy tidings.

He was, as Beatrice had described him, the familiar stage caricature of the self-made plutocrat—thick-necked, loose-lipped, little-eyed, coarse, low-browed, the gross materialist in all his lines. Just the sort of person, Janet decided, who would fall an easy victim to the patronizing salesmanship of a woman like her cousin.

She had a mild contempt for Beatrice and Beatrice's occupation. It was the second cousin, if not a closer relation, to millinery, she felt. And for millinery Janet gathered together all her scorn for the futile, the ephemeral, and the meretricious into one vigorous whole. If she could have destroyed at one blow all the hats in the feminine world except those worn to protect the head from cold or the eyes from sun, she would have felt that she was freeing a slave from shackles. Her hats, it may be said, bore ample witness to the prejudices of her spirit!

Thinking of many things, she made her way through the little stretch of side street on which Beatrice Hines, Incorporated, had its studios and swung into Madison Avenue. She was bound for the three-thirteen train back to Berwickbury, her home, her mother, and her work. She had had nearly three days of New York, and, as usual, that quite sufficed her. To her youthfully

uncompromising judgment, the city seemed a feverish, incoherent place, mightily set upon nothing in particular, too occupied in chasing its tail to be aware of the trivial nature of its employment. Janet, schooled in rather a hard school, was scornful of trivialities. So she was glad to be going back to Berwickbury, where her day's occupation seemed to her sanely bound up in the orderly procedure of the world. If the load of an ancient wrong sometimes lay heavily upon her spirit; if her home held no particularly defined power to draw her; if even her mother was sundered from her by that deepest of all abysses, the one separating those of the same blood and of alien temperaments; if all these things were so, she had at any rate her work, wholesome, plain, interesting to her, and, at the present moment, broadening to larger things. She liked her work, its demands upon her, its absence of all the ornamentation that seemed to her to render petty her cousin Beatrice's far more ambitious "flyer in industrials," as some one had once called the decorating venture.

Walking south with her easy, strong stride, she gave the tribute of a smiling glance to the florists' windows, glad with April wealth of bloom, and to the fruiterers' piled gold and jewels. For all the other displays of the rich, choice, "precious" little shops that lined the avenue, she had small interest. Hats and frocks, pictures, carvings, woods and jewels—these belonged to the world in which Beatrice was a part, and which was, for that very reason, indifferent to her. Their familiar, cousinly intercourse, accepted by both as a thing that had always been, was based, as both recognized, upon no affinity of mind or spirit, but merely upon habit and a common background.

It was strange, Janet was reflecting as she came abreast with St. Bartholomew's and turned east toward the sta-

tion, that Beatrice should have become engaged to Hugh Deering. She had always expected Beatrice somehow to achieve a "big" match, and, although she could not remember Hugh Deering at all, it was impossible for her to consider him in that light.

In the first place, there was his inheritance—plain, unadorned, as unlike Beatrice's as possible. When the cousins had been starched little maids with nurses and governesses surrounding them, he must have been a big boy at the Berwickbury high school, with all its inelegance and unexclusiveness of association. When the two little cousins had driven out behind shining horses, he had probably been playing baseball in the corner lot, or chopping wood for his mother's kitchen stove in the shabby brown cottage on the Deerfield road, or helping his father in the carpenter shop. And when the great crash had come in which so many of the aspiring industries of Berwickbury had been wrecked, the Deerings' among them, it had been necessary to recall him from the technical school where he had been studying engineering.

Janet's lips curled as she thought of it. It had not been necessary for any of the Hines or Fowler children to be recalled from their studies, though it had been the Hines and Fowler connection that had brought the catastrophe upon the town.

She was waiting her chance to cross the street through the crush of motors. It came by and by, and she set forth on the perilous undertaking, made safe for the moment. Suddenly, from out the side street, a car made a gliding turn; she heard a cry from a hundred throats; and she was lying in the roadway, looking with fascinated eyes at the glitter of black enamel and brass impending above her.

A policeman was helping her to her feet. The mass of black and brass was suddenly gone. The side street, mirac-

ulously clear for the moment, saw it streaking eastward. The shouts of the traffic policemen were ignored; the motor whirled on. And then, from the porte-cochère of the station, appeared a runabout. Its driver sensed the situation, and, with half a word from the policeman who was still half supporting Janet, he put on power and flashed after the runaway. It seemed to the girl, unhurt, but a little dazed, only a second before she, standing safe once more upon the sidewalk with a dozen people telling her what to do, saw the runabout twisting back, followed by the lawless taxi, with two policemen on the running board.

It was a good-looking young man that leaped from the little car and added himself to the throng about her. Even in her momentary confusion, she was aware of that. He was tall and straight and strong and wiry. His hair, she noticed when he removed his cap in greeting, was of a shade of auburn that his enemies might call red; his eyes were blue and keen. Across his upper lip, too close-cropped to hide the merry contour of his mouth, was a bristling little mustache of reddish auburn. He looked sharply at her.

"You were not badly hurt?"

The policeman was attending to the guilty chauffeur, and the captor of that fugitive addressed himself to Janet.

"Not at all, thank you."

"You might have been killed," he stated with conviction and a good deal of annoyance.

"But I wasn't," she replied.

His manner, crisp, frank, and slightly imperative, aroused in her a spirit of contradiction.

"I don't mean to say it was your fault. This fellow clearly disregarded signals. But——"

"But you want to blame me a little, too?" She smiled. "The way one always wants to blame people for giving one a shock or a fright."

"I thought it was only relatives who made one feel like that," he answered. "But, as a matter of fact, you couldn't have been looking where you were going."

"You weren't here to observe whether I was or not," she answered. Then, to the policeman, approaching to demand her name and address and to insure her presence as a witness against the offending chauffeur: "I don't live in the city, and it will be inconvenient for me to come back to give evidence——"

"More convenient to be knocked down and done for some day!" interjected the young man of the reddish hair.

She flashed a defiant glance at him. "It isn't any part of my job in life," she told him with great distinctness, "to make New York safe and sane. That is for New Yorkers. And, as I have said, I'm not one."

"And, as you have implied, you're blamed glad of it!"

"Of course," said Janet with dignity, addressing herself to the traffic officer and turning a conspicuous shoulder toward the young man, "I will come if it's absolutely necessary. But it ought not to be, with all the people who saw the occurrence, and you yourself——"

At the suggestion that it might be needed to furnish evidence, the crowd gently and swiftly dissolved. The young man of the runabout alone remained of the original group. He scowled and essayed to detain a choleric old gentleman, who resented his effort and hopped with much agility upon a Madison Avenue car and was lost to public service.

"I've got to get my train now," Janet went on, glancing at her watch. "I have only ten minutes, and I have to find my bag at the parcel room. But if it's absolutely necessary for me to come again, I will. My name——"

"It would be better to do the whole thing up now," said the young man.

"I know what I have to do," Janet informed him with some asperity of emphasis. "I have to take the three-thirteen train now. This is my name and address, officer."

She produced a cardcase from her hand bag and proffered her card to the policeman. In another second, she was across the street and disappearing toward the entrance of the station.

"Miss Fowler, Oakwood, Berwickshire, Connecticut," the officer repeated slowly as he transcribed the words into a notebook. "And now, sir, if you'll let me know where I can get you——"

"By Jove!" the young man was saying. "Miss Fowler, Berwickshire! That's funny! Here, officer, is mine."

He passed another card over to the policeman and, leaping into his runabout, drove it to a hotel near by, where he parked it. Then, sprinting back with a fine disregard of the perils of the road, so recently illustrated to him, he dashed into the station and took up his post at the entrance to the three-thirteen Midland Express.

There were still about four minutes before the departure of the train, but Janet had evidently made good time, for she did not pass him, and when the guard had closed the gate into the train shed, the young man turned, with an expression of disappointment upon his ruddy face, and walked slowly back toward his machine.

Meantime, the policeman, with a few remarks to the offending chauffeur, had inscribed in his notebook another name—that of Hugh Deering, whose address he designated as "Care the Mellish Construction Company."

CHAPTER II.

Janet, a little breathless from haste and from the brief excitement of her almost accident, made her way through the cars of the three-thirteen, looking

for an empty seat. But her delay and the righteous economy of the railroad, which would have felt convicted of sin had not all its double seats been fully occupied, defeated her. Nowhere could she spy the opportunity to sit down alone and collect her scattered wits. But in the last car she did glimpse the next best thing to solitude, a friendly form, unaccompanied. She made her way toward it.

"Miss Deering——" she began, and a young girl looked up from an absorbed contemplation of the crowds hurrying between the aisles of the train shed, and blushed shyly as she removed her bags and bundles from the seat beside her.

"Oh, Miss Fowler!" Her eyes, wide set, blue, and dreamy, brightened with pleasure. "How lovely! I didn't know that you'd gone to New York, too, for your holiday."

"Yes, and I'm coming home from it only by a hairbreadth escape from those awful streets. I was knocked down just now, a block or two from the station, by an automobile. Oh, no," as she marked the look of terror in the young face, "I wasn't hurt, as you see. But I think it did shake me up a little."

"Can't I—can't I," began Miss Deering in her nervous, breathless little way, "get you something? Some tea or some salts or some wine from the dining car? There's a diner on, I believe."

She had a pretty, hesitant manner that became her youth very well. She was not more than eighteen, and an old-fashioned eighteen, at that. Beside her, Janet's twenty-five seemed almost matronly, and Janet's manner almost regally assured.

"Oh, no, thank you! I'm all right. I was just a little shaken, and I'm breathless now rather because I hurried through the train than because of my little tumble. Did you have a good holiday?"

"Yes, lovely. I—I have been visit-

ing my brother over Easter. We always have good times together."

"I've always thought that a brother must be the finest thing in the world. Some one nearly of your own age, altogether of your own race and traditions, and yet of the mysterious opposite sex! It must be the most instructive relation."

"I don't know about the relation," said the girl, smiling, "but I do know about my brother Hugh. He's perfectly splendid. He's always been a sort of hero to me. You see, he was a big boy when I was born—twelve years old. And he always let me tag around with him, even when I must have been a most awful little nuisance. It nearly broke my heart when he went away to school.

I was six then. But when he had to come home because of my father's troubles— Oh, I beg your pardon!"

"Why should you beg my pardon?" Janet spoke with sober self-control. "Don't be afraid of hurting me by speaking of something that is, after all, a mere matter of history."

"How brave and sensible you are, Miss Fowler!" The girl's eyes were full of admiration as she turned them upon Janet. "I wish I could tell you how fine and splendid it has seemed to me, the thing you've done these last three years."

"I haven't done anything but try to earn my living," answered Janet, a lit-



A policeman was helping her to her feet.

tle brusquely. "There's no particular merit in that. Nothing in the world would induce me to live on any other terms, no matter what my condition. I don't like to talk anything that might sound like cant or rant, but I assure you that if there's one female of the species whom I detest it's the parasitic female."

"I don't mean merely that you work," said Effie Deering slowly, as if trying to pick out her thoughts into a coherent whole as a pianist might pick out a new theme upon the keys. "So many young women of all sorts work nowadays. Of course I know that. Even in places like Berwickbury, it's more

or less the fashion. But, you see, you might have gone somewhere else and had a very brilliant career—might have been a teacher or a lawyer or an artist or a writer——”

“My dear child, consider my natural equipment! My talents are altogether of the plain, commercial, executive kind.”

“Well, but, even so, you might have turned them to more brilliant account somewhere else, but you came back home from college—back to the place where everybody knew you and your people and all about the——”

“Go on! All about the share my people had in setting Berwickbury back a hundred years or so. Yes, everybody knows it.” Janet spoke without grimness or bitterness, but gravely, as if to help the other girl’s shy speech.

“And you took a very plain job in a very plain place—a job with my father. I think it was splendid!” Effie Deering finished in a little rush.

The events to which the young girl referred had been written in the history of Berwickbury only twelve years earlier. Before that time, it had passed through the usual stages of a New England town. It bore traces still of its wealthy colonial period in its old-fashioned white houses and the double row of elms along its main street. It had its common, with the hitching posts where the farmers tied up when they came in to mill or to the post office. It had its courthouse, testifying to its ancient dignity as a county seat.

And then, gradually, there had crept in upon the almost rural peace of the little town the rising tide of manufacture. The river that, for four generations, had served no other purpose than to provide certain elderly citizens with fish and certain young ones with an opportunity for summer moonlight drifting upon its peaceful waters had begun to furnish water power to all

sorts of factories. Mills had sprung up amid the horrified and indignant protests of old Berwickbury, which had held them to be a defilement to the landscape and to the sacred history of the town. Foreigners had come to work in the mills—Italians, Hungarians, Irish, Swedes, a motley crew. Cheap brick houses, hideous tenements had begun to appear. Trolley tracks had begun to weave and flash in the sunlight, connecting Berwickbury with other towns along the river, similarly degraded by modern industry. And by and by the place had been a city, with a city’s problems—with a congested section, with police courts, with schools, with formal little parks instead of fields, with two hospitals—and those not enough for all the sickness which the new city was able to develop—with strikes, with epidemics, with vice, with ten churches, with hotels, with a board of trade.

Through all the history of the city, the Fowlers had borne their dignified, prosperous part. The tombstones in the ancient cemetery indicated that the first Fowler to settle in the region had come over with the regicides. The family had followed the usual line of development. They had been farmers, ministers, doctors, teachers, soldiers, politicians. Good, thrifty citizens they had been, making out of the Berwickbury of each period all that was possible, rendering in turn back to Berwickbury such service as gave eminence to the server. And when, along with the courthouse, the town had set up a national bank, it had been quite natural that a Fowler should be a judge in the one and the president of the other.

Waxing prosperous, many of the Fowlers had gone away from the town and had become the same kind of citizens in other places that they would have been had they remained in Berwickbury—eminently respectable,

highly acquisitive. But there had always been enough of them remaining for any number of lucrative and decorative positions in the old place; they had been mill owners, bank directors, members of the board of trade, pastors of the First Church, and what not—up to twelve years before the day when Janet Fowler and Effie Deering rode home together from their Easter holiday in New York.

Twelve years before, Janet Fowler's father, Lemuel, and his brother-in-law, James Hines, with the connivance and assistance of others of the dominant circle in Berwickbury, had succeeded in wrecking the First National Bank and in forcing half the businesses of the city into bankruptcy. The First National Bank had stood on the old main street, opposite the common, for more generations than the memory of the oldest living inhabitant could compass. It was as much a Berwickbury institution as the river itself—one as little to be questioned, as little to be doubted. And, from the first, the Fowlers had been of it and in it. The city could scarcely recover from its moral shock for years after the terrible morning when it had waked to learn that Lemuel Fowler, hopelessly involved in dishonor, had shot himself, that Jim Hines had fled, and that half the population of the city—quiet old families living upon invested capital, busy new tradespeople—were ruined.

The Fowler connection, bitten by the mania for speedy and vast profits, had played with the bank's funds. Directors, they had "borrowed" large sums from the bank through dummies, had speculated in New York, and had lost. Trustees, they had used trust funds. They had borrowed more in order to recoup their losses. They had juggled books and accounts, and all in vain. They had gone down in disaster and had carried their fellow citizens with them halfway, at least, to utter ruin.

At the time of the tragedy, one of the depositors in the bank had been a Scotch carpenter, Douglas Deering by name. He had been a newcomer in Berwickbury and had prospered exceedingly well, according to his industry and thrift. He had been a plain, hard-working man with a plain, hard-working wife. When he had settled in Berwickbury, he had had but one child, a young lad, Hugh. But after five or six years, a second child had been born, a little girl, and then Mrs. Deering had moved from the two rooms in the rear of the carpenter shop, where she had contentedly abode all her years in the town, out to a cottage on one of the country roads near by; and the carpenter had enlarged his plant.

They had continued to prosper. Instead of doing all the work alone, Deering had employed assistants. He had grown from a carpenter to a builder. No longer had he merely repaired old frame houses, reshingled old roofs, and the like, but he had built new, ambitious dwellings for the mill managers. His boy had gone to college, entering an engineering school. Mrs. Deering, though she had continued to live in the shabby brown cottage, had set up a maid. Mr. Deering had invested in a buggy and a little brown mare.

Every dollar that he had possessed in the world, except that which was invested in the brown cottage and in his workshops, the builder had had in the First National Bank of Berwickbury and in its allied institution, the Berwickbury Saving Society. Every cent that he had possessed had been lost in the great failure of 1901. Three months after Lemuel Fowler had chosen to put a bullet through his heart rather than live through his disgrace, and after Jim Hines had made his successful retreat to a country without an extradition law, Douglas Deering had been back where he had been at the very beginning of his career—no, far-

ther down than that, for now he had had debts. He had not been able even to meet his pay roll, much less his material bills, the Saturday after the bank failure. He was, moreover, a widower. His wife had succumbed to the shock of their misfortune. Hugh, recalled from his studies, had been sent to New York to get such a position as he could.

At first it had seemed as if the stricken man would never rally his forces, would never again take hold of life with vigor, and indeed, for several years, he had done but a poor business, lacking initiative, lacking ambition. But gradually, after four or five years had wrought their healing upon him, he had begun to reach out again.

At the time of her father's suicide, Janet Fowler had been thirteen. Until then, she had been reared to all the standards of wealth. With her father and mother and a retinue of servants, she had lived on the outskirts of the city, at Oakwood, once the ancestral farm. Some prosperous Fowler of a period slightly subsequent to the original farmer's had added a new dwelling house to the land—a mansion modeled after a stately one he had visited in Cambridge. This was the house of Janet's earliest recollection—a noble, while-pillared, wide-corridorred dwelling, with a curved stairway ascending from the great hall, with mighty chimneys, with a wood-paneled dining room, which modern architects were always craving permission to copy, and with the original mahogany furniture wherewith the Fowler who had built it had furnished his mansion.

Outside the big house, there were gardens, hothouses, stables. Within, there were nurseries for the day and the night, a schoolroom, a breakfast room, a playroom—all sorts of royal appanages for a little American princess. Yet she had not displayed, in childhood, the same aptitude for elegance that her

cousin Beatrice had shown. It had been something of a grief to her mother. Mrs. Fowler had always been able to convince herself, by comparison of their features, that Janet was much the prettier child, yet it had been Bee who had achieved the effect of prettiness. Mrs. Fowler had been able to convince herself, by some maternal process of reasoning, that Janet was much the cleverer, yet it had always been Bee's smart sayings that had been passed around in the family conclaves. Mrs. Fowler knew, quite well, that her husband was more solidly rich than his sister's husband, yet it had been the Hines and not the Fowlers who had done all the dashing things—who had gone unexpectedly off to Europe for three weeks, or to California for ten days; who had given up their big, ugly modern house for the new hospital fair; who had captured the visiting celebrity. It had been Bee and not Janet who had seemed to have an instinct for the correct people to know and the correct thing to do, almost from her infancy.

Part of it all Mrs. Fowler attributed to the legend that Jim Hines—an outsider, not born to Berwickbury ways—had had a French mother. The good lady, at that period of her existence, had been a bit inclined to regard any foreign admixture of blood as a slight disgrace. Nevertheless, she ascribed many of the qualities in her niece Beatrice that she would have wished to see in her daughter Janet to that very strain which she quite unaffectedly despised.

Oakwood, the family place, had been given to her at the time of her marriage, and her own people had firmly refused to allow her to cast it into the all-devouring pool of Lemuel's assets when the great disaster had fallen. She, poor soul, had been willing enough to let the creditors have it. But her father and brothers, sensible men from

New York, could see no reason for the sacrifice. They themselves had not escaped entirely unscathed from their dealings with their relatives by marriage, and they had made it plain to their dear Miriam that she could have but scanty hopes from them—although, of course, they were prepared to do their duty and would never see her suffer. So she had finally given up her quixotic notion of turning in the great place, and she had finally accepted, along with their advice, a modest allowance from her relatives.

Oakwood itself she had eventually let—with the reservation of a suite of rooms for herself and her little girl—to the proprietress of Berwick'sbury's most exclusive, expensive, and therefore desirable boarding school for girls.

Under the tutelage of this lady, Janet had prepared for college. It had been agreed by all the family that a girl of her solid, somewhat stolid gifts would repay an academic education.

Janet had insisted upon adding to her four years at Vassar a year's training in secretarial work. This had not accorded in the least with her mother's vague ambitions for her. Mrs. Fowler had thought that the girl would be best preparing to fulfill her destiny if she would consent to pay long visits to the more successful members of the Fowler family, or to make long trips with them. These visits and trips, in Mrs. Fowler's dreams, always led to the most advantageous of marriages, with white lace romance included, for the lady was incurably sentimental. In a happy marriage, she had informed Janet, combating the secretarial scheme, lay a woman's only chance of happiness and dignity.

Janet had looked at her, marveling greatly, but refraining from speech by a mighty effort. To think that her mother, the pale, querulous plaything of fortune, could speak thus! See to what a pass the "career" of marriage had

brought Miriam Fowler! She had been treated, for a certain number of years, like a sort of hothouse plant, like a little toy queen of a little toy kingdom, like a doll, a baby. And then, at one blow, she had been reduced from that petty little make-believe sovereignty, and had begun to be again the plaything of a new set of circumstances, a new set of people.

Janet had tried to imagine what her mother might have become, even after the crowning tragedy and humiliation of her life, had she possessed talents of her own to develop, or work of her own to do. To the girl, intolerant, with high-minded youth's intolerance, of all failure, all compromise, her mother was one of the most pitiable craven figures in the world. She had thought to herself how differently she would meet such a trial—only, of course, to her such a trial would never come! Things like that happened only to the unprepared. She would be among the prepared, always ready for any sort of bout with fortune.

So, with a scornful, overbearing negative, she had dismissed her mother's suggestions as to her future and had insisted upon the training she desired. Mrs. Fowler, with the old-fashioned woman's gift for weaving dreams out of whatever material might be vouchsafed her—much as the old-fashioned woman had to develop a gift for making clothes out of whatever happened to be in the house—immediately began to plan that Janet should become secretary to a senator, a cabinet officer, a captain of industry, a leader of fashion, and from the vantage ground thus secured, should proceed as before to the advantageous marriage.

When, at the end of the year's training, Janet had actually returned to Berwick'sbury and had begun to look for a position in the town, her mother's disappointment and horror had rendered her almost inarticulate. Not



"And has he very keen blue eyes and a very positive manner?"

quite, however. She had retained enough speech to inform Janet that in her opinion the Fowler family endured a worse disgrace when one of its daughters actually sought to labor for money in Berwickbury than all the defalcations and dishonesties of the Fowler men had brought upon it.

At that, Janet had become slightly articulate herself. She was not greatly given to waste of words at any time, and more especially with her mother, whom she believed to be quite incapable of understanding any that she might utter. But this one time she had spoken, and she had made herself plain. She had revealed the fires that burned

beneath all her calmness, all her coolness—fires of shame, of determination to expiate; fires of devotion to that strange, new ideal of hers—the ideal of work for women.

"Can't I make you see it, mother?" she had cried appealingly. "Can't I make you? It's here that I want to work—here, where for so many generations we Fowlers have not worked, not really worked, but only juggled. It's here where my father defrauded them that I want to be of some humble use to the people. Don't you see? Can't you see? I haven't any wonderful talents. If I work from now till doomsday I can't make up the money to re-

place what we stole, we Fowlers and our connections and our friends. But there's one thing I can do, and that I mean to do. I mean to replace in the minds of all the people in Berwicksbury who come in contact with me the idea that a Fowler can work honestly, humbly, as the Fowlers used to work when they really amounted to something. I don't want to go somewhere else where no one knows about me. I don't want to get a job merely to use it as a diving board into matrimony and fashion and all the rest of it. I want to work here. Don't you see?"

"I see that you are a very self-willed, ungrateful girl," had been Mrs. Fowler's reply, the tears for once dried in her faded eyes by the fires of righteous anger. She had not known that she was uttering the everlasting rebuke of the passing generation to the one that is following it.

And then she had gone from the sitting room of their suite in the west wing of Oakwood—a room crowded with a thousand mementos of her happier days—into her bedroom. And there she had written a long entry in her diary, and had read over the carefully treasured letters that Lemuel had written to her when they had been engaged; and she had refused to come down to dinner. And she had been very patient, in a superior sort of way, with Janet when the girl had come to her later and had said:

"Mother, I don't mean to hurt you. I'm sorry. If only you would try to understand me a little!"

She had replied that she thought she understood her daughter perfectly—had said it with a rebuke and a dark meaning.

But three days later, when she had found that her daughter had actually answered an advertisement in the *Berwicksbury Republican* for a "young woman to keep books and attend to the correspondence" of Douglas Deer-

ing, Lumber and Carpentry, her vaunted understanding had deserted her and she had taken to her bed for a week.

All that had been two years ago. Janet had never told her outraged parent of her interview with the old carpenter, now a man of sixty. It had been a curious one, and the recollection of it she kept close in her heart, something to warm her in chill times of depression, something to freshen her in seasons of spiritual aridity.

At first, when he had heard who she was, he had utterly refused to consider her application. But she had stood her ground, and by and by, through the bitter animosity of years, something kindly had broken to the surface in the old man. He had suddenly seemed to understand her as her mother would never do. He had suddenly accepted her.

She had gone to work for him the next day and had worked for him ever since, her duties broadening beyond the clerical ones for which she had been engaged. After the one moment of understanding that had preceded his surrender to her desire, old Mr. Deering had never indulged again in anything approaching sentiment. Impersonal, sparing of words, he had treated her as if she had been a boy of whom he had never heard, come in answer to his advertisement and doing his work intelligently and well.

All this lay behind the two girls who sat together in the three-thirteen and journeyed up toward Berwicksbury. They did not know each other well. Janet had never been to the brown cottage where, for six years now, Effie had been a wonderfully capable little mistress. Effie occasionally came to her father's office, but her visits were brief and shy, like a bird's poise upon a window sill. Janet divined that the girl stood somewhat in awe of her. The legend of the Fowler grandeur per-

sisted in the city the Fowlers had once dominated.

"Oh, I wish I might have met you while Hugh was with me!" the younger girl exclaimed now.

Janet smiled, recognizing the double tribute.

"Did he bring you to the station?"

"Yes. He has a little car—that is, he has the use of it. You know he's a superintendent for the Mellish Construction Company, and they have jobs all over the city and outside it, too, and Hugh has to get around to them all. That's why he has the car. He couldn't afford one of his very own, though he's doing awfully well. He brought me up in that. Hugh is very old-fashioned, though he doesn't know it," she added with a gleam of amused sisterly understanding. "He really thinks that girls ought to be taken care of, that they can't find their way around alone—all that sort of thing!"

Janet, thinking of Beatrice Hines, marveled a little. It was amazing that that sophisticated young woman, with her quite definite ambitions, should have yielded to the love-making of a man like this one whom Effie Deering was sketching.

"Does your brother look like you or like your father?" she asked. "I dare say I must have seen him as a child, though I don't remember him."

"He doesn't look very much like either of us. They say he's the image of my mother's father—one of the sandy Scotchmen, you know. Hugh's really red-headed. I used to tell him so when we quarreled when we were little."

"Red-headed?" Janet turned and looked eagerly at her companion. "Is he tall, too? And awfully well built—all for strength and agility? And has he very keen blue eyes and a very positive manner?"

"Why, yes—I dare say he has a positive manner. I'm so used to it, you

see. And, yes, he is tall and very strong and active looking. Why?" She looked excitedly at the other girl. "Have you seen him? Have you met him? Do you——"

"I'll wager he's the man who caught the taxi that knocked me down!" Janet spoke as if a recognition of great importance had been made. "Does he drive a runabout, a Sturtevant?"

"Yes!" Effie's voice was vibrant with delight. "Isn't it wonderful? And he caught the taxi? Oh, dear me! If only you had known each other! I'd been talking about you a lot. You don't mind, do you? I'd been telling Hugh what it had meant to father to have you in the business these last two years. Sometimes father used to want Hugh to come back to Berwickbury and go in with him. But Hugh has always said there was nothing in it for a young man. I don't know, myself." Effie paused doubtfully and pondered.

"I know," Janet struck in with decision. "There's a lot more in it for a young man in a place like Berwickbury than there is in being a cog in a machine in New York. Unless one has capital, I mean. But I suppose New York has got hold of your brother, the way it does get hold of all the best and most ambitious young men."

"Yes," assented Effie, with a touch of dolefulness in her voice. "New York, or something in it, has certainly got hold of Hugh. We had a lovely time together—of course." Loyally she insisted upon it. "We always do. But I could see a difference this time."

Janet remembered and, remembering, was suddenly wroth against her cousin Beatrice. That deliberate young siren was the "something in it" that had got hold of Hugh. She felt a wave of anger against Beatrice. She had a recollection, clear-cut and surpassingly vivid, of a dominating male, keen-eyed, alert, who stood at a street corner and commanded her what she should do,

without having taken the customary preliminary step of getting himself presented to her. She was very angry against Beatrice; she told herself that her anger was in behalf of the old man who wanted to have his son with him in his business—the old man who needed his son, who needed new life, new vigor, new daring. Why, with a due injection of the qualities that Hugh Deering could bring into it, how that old building business could be made to boom! What was this nice child, Effie, rambling on about?

"It's wonderful, though, the way you've put father up to doing all sorts of new things. It's splendid. I told Hugh about it. I was telling him about your urging father to bid on the new hospital—the State one."

"And what did your brother think of that?" asked Janet eagerly.

"Well," the younger girl confessed deprecatingly, "he said he hoped father wasn't going to branch out rashly. He said that of course the hospital would be steel-and-concrete construction, so father might not feel—might not be, I mean—competent to handle it."

"Doesn't he know that the new grammar school out on Warburton Avenue was steel and concrete? Doesn't he know your father did that job successfully? It's only a matter of getting the job and letting out the contracts."

"Y-es." Effie sounded a little doubtful. "Only the grammar school was such a little thing, even if it did have to be fireproof."

"The principle is just the same." Janet was impatient, resentful. She was conscious of a personal disappointment. It would have gratified her extremely to know that the blue-eyed young man of the street-corner encounter had paid her the compliment of rejoicing because she had got his father out of a small-business rut. "I do hope he won't write to Mr. Deer-

ing and try to discourage him from bidding on the State hospital."

"I hope he won't. But he seemed rather anxious about it. You see, New York has got Hugh so badly that he hasn't much faith in the resources of any other part of the country. I suppose he thinks the Mellish Construction Company ought to be imported to put up that State hospital. And he probably thinks that a man of father's age ought to be content with little repair jobs."

"Well, he's not going to be content with little repair jobs!"

Janet's head was high, Janet's voice was athrill with determination. Her cheeks were brilliantly colored, her eyes alight. Effie, watching her with the admiration that was so subtly blent of a hundred things—of the old, half-envious dreaming of a poor little girl concerning the fairy life that must belong to the rich little girl; of the instinctive respect that even the sturdiest democrats have for the splendors of wealth; of a nobler recognition of the stalwart fineness of Janet's course; of gratitude for what the older girl had done for her father—thought she had never seen Janet so beautiful.

"I wish my brother could see you now!" she cried.

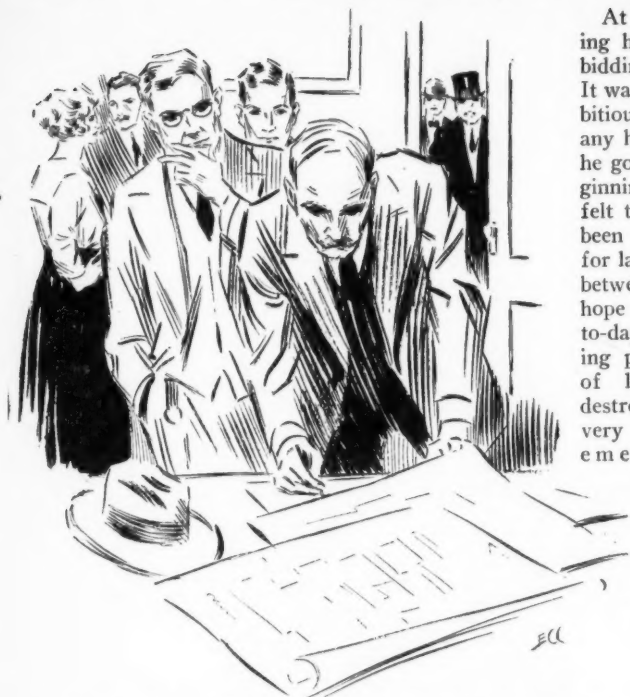
"It wouldn't do any good," replied Janet enigmatically.

She was thinking, subconsciously, of Beatrice, but Effie thought she was thinking of the State hospital and answered:

"Well, I don't know. Hugh is really a reasonable person. And it seems to me that you could persuade any one of anything."

CHAPTER III.

The State had bought land on the hills outside of Berwickbury for a State hospital for the insane. The competing plans had been examined, the design selected; the award of the



They studied the plane; they made notes of the specifications.

building contract was the next step in the undertaking. From all over the State, wires were being pulled for this contractor and for that. But the Berwickbury papers, after the State had decreed that the hospital was to go to the city, were unanimous in demanding that a local firm of builders should put up the building. They had succeeded in raising sufficient clamor to induce the building committee of the legislature to limit the bids to the contractors of the State, thus shutting out the most dangerous competition, that of New York. And there was a private intimation sent out that the contractors of Berwickbury itself would be encouraged beyond those of any other city in the State.

At first Douglas Deering had not thought of bidding upon the work. It was a vastly more ambitious undertaking than any he had made. Had he gone on from his beginning of long ago, he felt that he would have been a builder qualified for large work now; but between that time of hope and ambition and to-day lay the deadening period of calamity, of life-sapping, hope-destroying failure. Very, very slowly had he emerged from that cloud. He was a man of much native energy and, in spite of himself, it had helped him forward. He had begun to "come back," as other men said, even before the day when the daughter of the man who had ruined him had entered his employ. But since then there was no doubt that his ambition had taken higher flights. It was Janet who urged him, with every subtle and open inducement, to enter the competition for the hospital.

She had overcome all the objections he had been able to raise but one. She had forced him to admit that he was as competent as any other man in his business to pass upon the quality of work rendered in every building operation. She had made him admit that to crown his long, laborious, unexciting round of small accomplishments with this big achievement would be a pride to him. She had obliged him to admit that he could render the State as good

service as any other contractor. But all his years of toil had netted him but little financial reward, thanks to her own father's speculations. He had no capital; and although he had eventually paid, dollar for dollar, all those claims against him outstanding when his bankruptcy had occurred, he felt that he could not be assured of sufficient credit to enable him to undertake the big contract, should he gain the award.

Janet could scarcely have told why she had so set her heart upon old Deering's winning of the contract. She liked him very much—fondly, in a sort of daughterly way, and respectfully, as became a young employee. To restore him to himself, to what he might have been, had become, as it were, the symbol of that task of expiation upon which, without sentimental words, she had embarked. It was not only her own life that she was living, with its tasks, its wholesome satisfaction in them, its clear-eyed ambitions in regard to them; it was also her father's fault that she was slowly expunging from the records. To help old Deering to a big job, as big a one as he could have hoped for even had he never met with misfortune—that was to be a sign of triumph for her. Especially did she desire it after her trip from New York with Effie.

"You could get a bonding company to go on your bond," she told the old man, when he opposed to her enthusiasm the plain statement of his finances. "That's all that would be required."

"Maybe I could and maybe I couldn't," he replied. "It isn't so easy for a man who's been through bankruptcy to do what he pleases. But, anyway, the job is not for the like of me. Those things are cut and dried. A big melon like this is to be sliced among the politicians and the big contractors. I've never stood in with them. The committee'd see to it that a man like me didn't get a look-in."

"Of course you wouldn't get the contract if yours wasn't the lowest bid," she admitted.

"And do you think that the steel men and the stone men and the marble men and the plumbers and the electricians, and all the lot of them, would give me figures to make my calculations on, like what they'd give Dolan, of Middlebury, for instance? Dolan, who'll throw a half a dozen jobs a year their way to my none? You're wrong if you think so."

"Of course, if the subcontractors' estimates didn't warrant you in making the lowest bid, then you wouldn't get the job. But you'd be no worse off for having put in the best bid that you could than you'd be for not putting one in." She held doggedly to her point. "Why don't you see what are the best figures you can get on the specifications from the best subcontractors you know?"

And finally the old man had caught fire.

"I'll do it," he said abruptly in answer to her last question. "I'll do it. There isn't a chance in a million"—thus he propitiated the listening fates with expressed misgivings—"but I'll see what it could be done for."

The bids for the State hospital were to be closed in three weeks—on Tuesday, May the 12th, by six o'clock in the evening. Janet and old Deering put in a feverish ten days. She was constantly telephoning to every variety of subcontractor. All sorts and conditions of men—rough, smooth, young, old, some in overalls, some in silk hats—were constantly swarming through the office. They studied the plans; they made notes of the specifications; they went away and came back in an hour for another look.

The news spread that Old Man Deering was going to compete. His rivals smiled knowingly, some of them rather kindly. He had been out of the big

running too long, they told one another, to be counted in now; he didn't know the ropes; he didn't know the wires to be pulled; he was unaware of the necessity of placating this political power, of greasing that political hand. Above all, in his innocence, he appeared unaware of the fact that Mr. Bernard Ryan, unofficial boss of Berwickbury, had already decided that the thing was to go to Dolan, of Middlebury. Ryan's son was engaged to marry Dolan's younger sister, and that, in the popular opinion in building circles, quite decided the question of who should build the State hospital at Berwickbury.

Now, although Janet regarded herself as far too modern to indulge in the old-fashioned sort of philanthropy common in the nineties, she was not without a few humble and socially unknown protégées in her town. She had acquired them during a brief essay at girls'-club work at a settlement in the mill district. The club work she had given up after a few months because she had found that it seemed to her almost as futile as the old-fashioned charity which she would have scorned. She saw a new heaven and a new earth in terms of her own—a race of people busy and happy at work for which they had been trained. Until society was somehow reorganized to give them that, the situation looked rather hopeless to her, and club work a waste of time. Still, out of it had survived a half dozen friendships, very shocking to her mother on the triple ground of social, moral, and hygienic danger.

One of these girls, Lottie Johnson, had married—nearly a year before the business of the State hospital had fired Janet's ambition for her employer—a thriving young saloon keeper of the mill district. Lottie had been rather apologetic about it to Janet, struggling with a vague impression that saloon keeping was not looked upon with favor in the upper social circles of Berwickbury,

desirable and remunerative as her own found it. But at the same time she had been very glad and proud and happy, and Janet had gone to the wedding, and had felt quite awkward and uncomfortable among a lot of kindly people who were rendered equally awkward and uncomfortable by her presence. From time to time after the wedding, she and Lottie had met, and only the other day the young wife had sent her word that a baby had arrived, and that she guessed she would soon have to take Miss Fowler's advice and remove her dwelling from her husband's place of business. But meantime would Miss Fowler soon come in to see the baby, who was—really and truly and *not* just because she was his mother—the most remarkable baby?

In the press of her business after she had come back from New York, Janet had neglected to go to see Lottie. But one afternoon, five or six days before the closing of the bids, she found herself with a free hour. All the subcontractors had been seen and were at work making their estimates. Mr. Deering had seen the head of a bonding company and had been most genially assured that it would bond him for any sum he could name. There was nothing in particular to do, and when her boss suggested that she take the afternoon off as a slight compensation for the evenings she had been spending at the office, Janet bethought herself of Lottie and made her way down to the mill district.

The saloon occupied the first floor of a modest three-story brick building. Lottie's household gods were set up in the second-floor flat, while the third floor was let to a tenant.

"Tim keeps a quiet, respectable place, as you well know, Miss Fowler, or I would never have married him," said Lottie. "But just the same we ain't going to stay here. It wouldn't really be best for the boy. I'm broad-minded,

and I haven't got any false pride or silly notions, but I'd hate to have the first words my baby learned be those of two old Dutchmen quarreling over pinochle in the room downstairs. You can hear everything that goes on down there, through the chimney. They use it like a regular club, Miss Fowler, that back room. Well, I don't begrudge it to them—it's the only one they've got, and as long as they behave themselves, they're welcome to it. But Tim thinks we'll move a little way out—have a place with a bit of a garden for the boy to play in. And Tim'll get a good man for night work, and'll spend his evenings at home. Most of them, anyway. I don't mean to be unreasonable, but I do think a man's wife and baby ought to see him once in a while, Miss Fowler, don't you?"

Miss Fowler agreed that it seemed a moderate and reasonable demand on the part of a wife, and then, as rumbling sounds came up the big chimney, she added with a laugh:

"Are the pinochle players here already, Lottie?"

"Oh, no. There's nobody here day-times, to speak of. Those that stop in for a glass of beer or anything before the closing whistle blows haven't got much time to waste. They take what they want at the bar. I do think—Why, what's the matter, Miss Fowler?" For Janet had put up her hand suddenly, as if desiring silence, and was leaning forward toward the chimney.

"Do you know who is downstairs now, Lottie?" she whispered after a minute of intent listening.

Lottie shook her head, then nodded it violently.

"I did hear Tim say that Mr. Bernard Ryan was coming down here today to meet a party. He does come sometimes. Maybe it's him," she whispered shrilly. Janet nodded. "Can you hear what they're saying, Miss Fowler?"

"I heard something," answered Janet, getting up from her rocker near the chimney and coming over toward the bed. "It sounded queer, reverberating against the iron chimney. I suppose it acts like some sort of a sounding board. He's going to look like you, Lottie."

She had paused beside the crib in which lay a young person in whom only an absolute genius of prescience could discover any strong human resemblances.

"Oh, Miss Fowler! How can you say so? He's the livin' image of Tim!" protested the grieved young mother.

It seemed to her that Miss Fowler took her leave with some abruptness, but she ascribed this rather to the heat of the apartment, kept warm for the baby, than to anything overheard from the safe little back room below. Lottie was profoundly uninterested in politics, and it never occurred to her that a "lady born" like Miss Fowler did not share her indifference.

As soon as Janet reached the street, she wrote on a slip of paper from her bag the words, "Dolan's figure one hundred and forty-six thousand dollars." Then she sped back to the office and broke in excitedly.

Mr. Deering was not used to excitement on the part of his young assistant. Hers was usually the efficiency of tranquillity. So he was a little astonished at her manner when she flung the door open and burst into the room.

"Mr. Deering, you've got to make your figure below one hundred and forty-six thousand dollars!" she breathlessly informed him.

"And why have I to do that?" demanded the old man.

"That's going to be Dolan's figure—Dolan's, of Middlebury," she went on eagerly. "I heard Mr. Bernard Ryan telling Martin—the plumber Martin, I mean—that he would have to give Dolan a low figure on the plumbing for

the State hospital, because Dolan had to make the total less than Swift, of Hartford, and some man in Swift's office had sold Bernard Ryan the information about Swift's figure. So he knows Dolan will underbid Swift if he makes a bid for as low as one hundred and forty-six thousand dollars. You understand me?"

"I hear what you're saying. I'm not deaf. But when you tell me that you—you!—have got information like that out of Bernard Ryan, who's just about as loose-lipped and garrulous as an oyster, I can't say I understand you altogether. Why was your friend Ryan so confiding to you?"

"He wasn't confiding anything to me. He was talking to Martin, the plumber Martin, telling him why he had to make a low figure on the plumbing specifications, and promising that Dolan would make it up to him one way or another."

"And where were you, you astonishing young lady, when Bernard Ryan was talking like that to his henchman?"

"They were in the back room of a saloon down at River and Walnut Streets that the husband of a friend of mine keeps," explained Miss Fowler of Oakwood, quite unaware of the incongruity of her statement with her appearance and her background. "I was upstairs in my friend's bedroom. She's in bed; she has just had a baby. Of course they don't know that I overheard them. I don't feel"—she defended herself as if against a charge—"that I've been in the least guilty of eavesdropping or anything underhanded like that."

"I wasn't thinking of criticizing your methods of gaining information, Miss Fowler," replied the old man, twinkling. "I was only thinking that very few young ladies in your section of Berwicksbury have such valuable friends."

"Oh!" Janet spoke rather flatly. She felt for a second foolish; then she

rallied. "But you will put in a lower bid?"

"I will," old Douglas Deering promised briefly. "If Dolan can afford to take it for one hundred and forty-six thousand dollars, with all that he'd have to pay out in graft, I can afford to underbid him. If the men I have figuring on the contracts can't give me low enough figures—why, there are others! And I'm heartily obliged to you," he added, "for having a friend that married a saloon keeper—and for having a pair of sharp ears yourself."

"I'm glad I happened to hear them," Janet admitted, with unaccustomed shyness in her pleasure. She loitered a minute. "Do you want me to call up anybody? To write any letters? No? I'll be home all the evening, if anything should turn up— Oh, by the way, Mr. Deering, does your son know that you're going in on the State hospital?"

"Yes, he knows it. He's inclined to think it's rather a silly performance on the old man's part, but, after all, if it amuses the old gentleman, what's the harm? That's what I gather is his general attitude in regard to it. Of course he's quite sure that I won't get it—that keeps him easy in his mind. They're all for shelving us old fellows, the young ones are. I didn't try it with my old man. I didn't dare. He was a better man at seventy than most boys half his age."

"You'll get the contract," Janet predicted. "And then you can show your young man a thing or two. He ought to be here working in partnership with you, organizing a big local business, rather than being a mere hired man for a corporation in New York."

"It isn't altogether his fault that he isn't," replied old Deering. "The plans I had made for him— Oh, well, never mind!"

Janet, recalling as she could not fail to do, the circumstance that had

changed all the Deering plans, flushed a little. It was not often, since he had accepted her, that the old man let slip any word to remind her of her father's part in his ruin. Whenever he did forget himself and let fall a reference, he was rendered so acutely miserable by it that Janet was usually at some difficulty to restore him to his ease again. But to-night, when she had brought him the bit of information that might prove the very foundation stone of new success for him, she felt an unreasonable sense of hurt that the old wrong should be recalled.

She said good night quickly, and started to leave the office, but as her hand was on the knob, it was turned from the other side and the door swung inward, pushing her behind it.

"Hello, father! How are you? I just ran down for Sunday to look into these little flyers you're taking. 'Do you think at your age it is right?'"

"Miss Fowler," called the old man, who had shaken his son's hands during this speech, "I want you to meet my son, Hugh."

They looked at each other, and irresistibly each broke into a smile. To Janet, the cluttered office was transfigured; it was as if some one had run up a window and let in sunlight and air, the song of birds and the shouts of happy children at play. Later, interpreting these impressions in the cold light of reason, she told herself that he was a wholesome, vital sort of person.

"You haven't been trying any more conclusions with taxis, I hope?" he said.

"No. And you, I hope, haven't been laying down the law to other young women whom you haven't met?"

"But perhaps I knew who you were all the while. How can you tell? I must have seen you a hundred times."

"Of course we must have seen each other when we were children. Ber-

wicksbury was a little place, after all. But——"

"What are you two talking about?" demanded the old man.

His son explained.

"I had the privilege of seeing Miss Fowler a few weeks ago in town. She had just had an encounter with a taxi and was a trifle the worse for wear, as to her hat——"

"Oh! I never thought of my hat until afterward. It did look disreputable," interrupted Janet.

"But she was quite sure that she had no time to waste in appearing against the chauffeur who ran her down. She was headed for the three-thirteen train for Berwickbury, and no little thing like colliding with a motor car could change her mind in regard to the necessity for catching that train."

Hugh's blue eyes laughed and teased her; she liked the sensation of being teased.

"Miss Fowler, in my experience of her, always does know what she wants to do, and she generally does it, too," stated the old builder. "She frequently knows what she wants other people to do, and they often do it."

"You make me sound a dreadful person, Mr. Deering," the girl protested. "I'm truly not such an opinionated and pig-headed character—as your father makes me out."

She blushed as she turned toward Hugh Deering, and she was conscious of an absurd feeling of annoyance at being described in such adamant terms as those of the older man.

"Father didn't mean that you were opinionated." The son expounded and mitigated his parent. "He only meant that you had a mind and a will of your own."

But to Janet, at that moment, the possession of a mind and a will of her own seemed somehow undesirable in a woman. She wanted to stay and to



"Do you know who is downstairs now, Lottie?" she whispered after a minute of intent listening.

argue the point, to prove to them that she was all there was of docile, yielding, impressionable. But she could scarcely intrude any longer upon the family reunion, even for the purpose of establishing a totally new ideal of herself. So she took her leave of them and went home to Oakwood, walking with less than her customary speed and assurance of stride. The problem she debated was how it had been possible for her cousin Beatrice, so obvious in artifice, so calculating in effects, to capture the fancy of that vigorous, astute, merry young man back there.

For among the branches of human knowledge not taught either at Oakwood or at Vassar was that of the psychology of sex attraction. And Janet, mature in judgment, experienced, even shrewd, in all sorts of practical affairs, was singularly unawakened in emotion. Never before

in her twenty-five years had she given to a man, as a man, one half the thought that she had already given to Hugh Deering, seen but twice. She had had friends among young men and boys, but she had not particularly differentiated them in her thoughts from the girls whom she liked and with whom she pursued study or sports in comradely fashion. The boys were, perhaps, a little more athletic, a little less liable to caprice; but as Janet's taste was for the sane and

sensible, the highly modern, among women, there was not even this difference to an accentuated degree.

She was a trifle annoyed with herself for giving so much consideration to Hugh Deering. After all, it didn't concern her if he was going to make himself permanently unhappy by marrying a woman like Beatrice Hines. And if he was such a dolt as not to see through Beatrice, why, he deserved his destined unhappiness.

But not even with this decision and with the shrug with which she accompanied it, thrusting both her cousin and her employer's son out of her mind, was she able to rid herself entirely of the picture of him laughing into her eyes.

CHAPTER IV.

Had any one in Hugh Deering's confidence asked him the question that Janet put so insistently to herself—why he was engaged to Beatrice Hines—he would have been forced to reply that he did not know. Ever since the

amazing event had occurred he had puzzled his wits to find the answer.

He had never intended to marry a girl like Beatrice. He had not intended to marry at all for years. His ideal woman was as unlike his fiancée as it was possible for one female to be unlike another. His ideal was, according to proper masculine tradition, composed about equally of his mother's virtues and the features of an unusually pretty magazine-cover girl. She was—the ideal—old-fashioned, skilled in housewifery, devoted to her home, her family, her religion. She was thrifty, hard working, sentimental, pure-minded. She combined, as the old-fashioned man always wished her to combine, the totally contradictory qualities of the sturdy oak, deep-rooted in responsibilities and capabilities, and of the clinging vine, graceful, decorative, flatteringly parasitic.

Being in no practical sense a fool, Hugh was quite aware that his fiancée bore no resemblance to his ideal. He had met Beatrice the January before. The Mellish Construction Company was adding a ballroom wing to ex-Senator Brandywine's monstrous New York pile of stone and marble, and Hugh, inspecting the progress of the work, had happened in at the same moment with Mrs. Brandywine, who had in tow the decorator who was to do the interior, Miss Hines.

Hugh had himself had one or two encounters with Mrs. Brandywine, who was credited with the worst temper and the most unbridled tongue among the plutocratic women of New York, and he had rejoiced in the finished insolence with which Miss Hines, to whom the owner of the ballroom presented him, had treated her. Subtle, stinging, overbearing, the small, slim, dark girl had made every sentence she uttered an impertinence to her client. Mrs. Brandywine had choked apoplectically upon the retorts and the rage with which

she evidently seethed, and had accepted Beatrice's rulings meekly.

The young builder and the young decorator had left the great mass of ornate stone together, Beatrice having refused a lift in her patron's limousine with an air of regarding it as a mere confession of age, *avoir du pois*, and general decrepitude to ride.

"I'm afraid I can't persuade you to let me take you downtown in my wretched little runabout, since the chariot of the great was no temptation to you," Hugh had said as they had left the house together, bowed out by a magnificent thing in footmen.

"On the contrary," Beatrice had replied gayly, "I shall adore to have you take me down to my place, if you're going in that direction. Or even if you are not," she had added, with her air of a charming, spoiled autocrat.

"But suppose our grandiose client is watching from behind her renaissance lace curtains and sees that you were merely putting her off when you said that you didn't care to ride?"

"I'm counting on that. Before that ballroom is finished, I mean that Mrs. Cresus Brandywine shall have it firmly imbedded in what serves her as a mind that there is one person in New York who disdains intercourse with her except for commercial purposes. Isn't she dreadful?"

Hugh had laughed good-naturedly.

"She's not much on the—ever-womanly," he had admitted. "But she isn't worth taking seriously, is she?"

"I feel it a holy mission in life to humiliate her," Beatrice had replied smartly. "It's that feeling that converts decorating from an occupation into a cause. Besides which," she had added, slanting a mischievous glance at him from her green-gray eyes, "it's awfully good business with people like her—the *nouveaux*."

"I'm not old enough to have developed a code for keeping upstarts in

their proper places," Hugh had answered dryly.

Nevertheless he had not been seriously critical of the girl's insolent attitude. It had amused him. A great many things amused him at this period of his life; he had a real zest for gayety. Combined with his ability and his native hard-headedness, which, it seemed, would eventually make him a successful man of business, there was in him the young adventurer's spirit of joyful challenge to the world as he met it.

Eventually, of course, it was this spirit that had led to his engagement to Beatrice. He had never known a girl like her. She piqued his interest. She intrigued his fancy. She was, as has been said, not at all the sort of person he had designed for his helpmeet. She was a bit of spice in the dish of existence, and not one of the substantial elements. But spice, once the taste is acquired for it, becomes a necessity to the palate. In two months, Hugh, though he weakly protested, had found his feet turning irresistibly every day toward Beatrice's exotic abode, had found his ears attuned to all her little impertinences, little mock wickednesses. In three months, he had been engaged to her. His reason had still protested, but here his old-fashioned code had stepped in and had combated reason: He had made love to her; she was a lady. A man of decent instincts did not make love to a lady without being prepared to pay the price of his love-making.

She was like an intoxicant. Every evening when he saw her, he gave himself up to the influence of her sprightliness, her humor, her charm, her *diablerie*. He found her pointed, stinging little jests infinitely amusing. He found her suggestions of restrained passion infinitely provocative. He gave himself up to her, silencing all the voices that bothered him when he

was away from her—the voices that asked him if he were right in insisting that her gayly advertised lack of conscience was a mere amusing, naughty pose; how he could be sure that all her clever pretenses of heartlessness, all her vaunted, though not practiced, lack of morality, were mere affectations, like her long earrings, like her pretty, daring hats.

She proclaimed the cynic's creed of expediency. He had found the proclamation amusing, alluring, until they were engaged; then he strove to believe it a mere pretense. He was not quite successful in his effort; hence he was not quite happy in his engagement. But he had no intention of breaking it, indeed he could scarcely be said to have had the desire to break it. Beatrice had not allowed her charms to be staled by custom. Suggesting, promising unutterable things, she nevertheless did not allow her lover to be surfeited at the feast.

Hugh, being a normal young man, was not lacking in a certain share of wholesome self-conceit. He knew something of his own ability, and he had pleasant reassurances as to his magnetic personality in the ease with which he made friends both in business and in social life. Nevertheless, he had his periods of wonder at finding himself betrothed to Beatrice Hines. His father's misfortune, coming after he had left the family roof-tree, had not embittered his spirit. In his occupation, he saw men rising and men falling every day. He had not lived in the very house with failure, and therefore it did not mean tragedy to him. That he and the daughter of one of the men who had caused his father's ruin should meet in a world apart from that old world was natural; it was even piquant. He felt no romantic sense of a feud overcome in his relations with Beatrice. But he did sometimes wonder what there was about him that had

proved irresistible to that ambitious little schemer. It would be years, if indeed the time should ever come, before he could restore her to the affluence of her youth. And Beatrice made no secret of the fact that she desired affluence, was set upon it. Position she calmly assumed that she had never lost.

There was, of course, but one answer to this question. Hugh accepted the answer humbly, even a little frightenedly. Beatrice, regardless of her plans, had fallen in love with him. That was the only theory which reduced all the elements in the situation to a coherent whole. And on that theory, he was held to the engagement, no matter what misgivings he might have.

After all, they were few. He was young—the blood ran warm in his veins; she was pretty, alluring, provocative. His heart beat faster when he kissed her; the glance of her bright eyes, the flutter of her little white hands, stirred him. Of course they were meant for each other and their mating must prove a success. On the day when she donned her bridal veil, she would, of course, put on with it all those traditional qualities he had intended to find in his wife—the virtues of the oak, the fragile charm of the vine. Thus he stilled the questions in his soul, thus he warmed the chill that sometimes crept over his heart.

CHAPTER V.

It was about four o'clock in the morning when Janet was aroused by a knock on her bedroom door. The sleepy maid to whom she opened it told her that she was wanted at the school telephone. Thrusting her feet into her slippers and throwing a wrapper over her shoulders, Janet hurried out of her room and down the long corridor to the stairs. There was a branch telephone at the landing, and, oppressed by a sense of dread at the unusual hour of the summons, she took up the receiver. A

confused foreboding of disaster to some distant member of the Fowler clan sounded in her voice as she spoke.

"Hello, hello! This is Janet Fowler speaking."

The voice that vibrated along the line electrified her. It was Hugh Deering's.

"I'm sorry to disturb you at this hour," he said, and his tones were not the buoyant, lively ones she associated with him, "but my father is very sick. He had a slight stroke last night. He fell as he was getting ready for bed. Yes, of course we've had doctors and a nurse. He's paralyzed, temporarily, at least. His legs. His mind seems perfectly clear. Indeed, he's very vigorous and insistent. I hope you won't be terribly annoyed, but he insists upon seeing you. Can you come out? I waited until daylight to call you, although father's been wanting me to for the last three hours."

"I'll be out in half an hour," answered Janet, wasting no words in futile sympathy. "Is there anything I can do for you on the way out?"

"No, thank you. Doctor Holbrook and the nurse attended to everything. I'll come for you, if you'll let me."

"I can come perfectly well alone," replied Janet. "Don't trouble."

"It's no trouble. Indeed, I think I'd like a breath of air. We've been up all night, Effie and I. I've just put her to bed. I'll be there in fifteen minutes."

He rang off before Janet could make any further protests. She hurried back to her room and, with swift, unwasteful motions, made her toilet. In fifteen minutes, trig and tailored, she was waiting at the big iron gates of Oakwood as Hugh drew up in a taxi. As he sprang out and helped her in, they were both vividly aware of the sweetness of the spring morning. The shadows were lifting; rose and gold were beginning to dominate the pearly hues of dawn. All the leaves in the Oak-

wood park were putting forth, tenderly green; there was the sweetness of damp grass in the air. The apple orchards lying south of the old farmhouse were billowy with white of blossoms; the twisted lilac bushes that had stood for more than a century in its dooryard sent up their purple incense to the morning sky. The ineffable freshness of the early morning enveloped all the world. It touched Janet's heart as never before.

Hugh looked pale and a little tired. His face, robbed of the laughter that had clothed it when she had seen it before, was chiseled, she saw, in rather stern lines. He was strong of jaw, rather grim of lip, when the gayety of youth and high spirits had vanished from his countenance. She decided that she liked his face even better thus.

"My father, Miss Fowler," he said, turning to her abruptly after her preliminary murmurs of sympathy were over, "has taken a most obstinate notion. Of course, you see that this seizure of his puts an end to his plan for bidding on the insane hospital. I tell you, frankly, that I never was in favor of that plan. Please don't interrupt me," he hurried on, to forestall the protests that were gathering in Janet's face. "I want to make my position clear. I think it too big an undertaking for a man who has done only small work for so many years. I know how you have set your heart upon it; he and Effie both told me. It has been a wonderful experience for father to have you with him, and I approve of all the branching out he has done hitherto. But this thing I do not approve, and I came down to Berwickbury partly to try to persuade him to give up the plan. The unfortunate event of last night shows, it seems to me, that I was right. Of course, a stroke of this kind may be brought on by anything, or by nothing traceable. But I can't help feeling that, in father's

case, it may have been hurried by the excitement attendant upon his interest in this competition."

"But you said," cried Janet indignantly, "that his brain is perfectly unclouded."

"Yes, but I said he had had a stroke," answered Hugh doggedly.

"Had you been arguing with him against the competition?" she demanded.

He turned quickly, rather angrily, toward her.

"Do you mean to imply that you think it was argument with me that excited him too much?"

"It was you who said the stroke might have been caused by excitement," replied Janet, dogged in her turn.

"I had been arguing with him. He was perfectly obstinate about it. He didn't seem to grow excited. But of course you have given a name to the horror that has been at my elbow all night."

He looked at her, with something bitter, something perplexed, something pleading in his eyes. Janet was filled with a desire to comfort him as strong as her desire to oppose him had been a moment before.

"I don't believe excitement had anything to do with it," she declared valiantly; "either the excitement of getting ready for the competition or of arguing with you about it. You mustn't think it was excitement. Neither must I. We should grow morbid. If it had been excitement," she ended firmly, "it would have been his brain that would have been affected."

This authoritatively uttered medical opinion seemed to give Hugh some comfort.

"I think maybe you're right," he said hopefully.

"But what is it he wants to see me about?"

"He's set upon going ahead with the competition. I mean that he's set upon



"But perhaps I knew who you were all the while. How can you tell? I must have seen you a hundred times."

having us go ahead with it, you and me. He insists that I shall give up my work in New York and come back home."

"And you don't want to?" Janet tried to speak impersonally, tried to think impersonally. But there was a volume of repressed hope, of repressed fear, in her voice.

"Of course I don't want to!" He spoke vehemently. She felt that he was expressing all the opposition, all the violence of distaste, that he had been obliged to moderate in his father's sick room. "Of course I don't want to! What has Berwicksbury to offer me?"

"I suppose your father would make some sort of a partnership arrangement with you," she answered slowly,

thoughtfully. "I should think a partnership in a firm in a growing place like this would be more interesting, probably more profitable, than being a mere employee of a New York concern."

"I admit that it wouldn't be bad fun to build a State hospital. But what are the chances of father's getting it?" The question was merely rhetorical. He answered it himself. "Not one in a hundred. And then I should have given up my connection with the Mellish people for nothing. I don't mean to be a mere employee in New York always, either."

"But it will be a considerably later day before you are on your own than if you stay here with your father," she

persisted. "I suppose all big New York firms have sons and nephews ready to step into membership."

They drew up before the shabby brown cottage that had sheltered the Deerings for so many years. It was rather charming in the early May morning. The street upon which it stood straggled countryward; there were woods in the distance. There was a field between it and its next-door neighbor, and in the field two cows were placidly at grass. A gnarled wistaria vine climbed upward from the ground and wreathed the piazza in lovely, pendulous bloom. In the big back-yard there were trees, and, looking everywhere with interested eyes, Janet spied currant and raspberry bushes making a hedge. The green stretch of the little lawn in front of the house was unbroken by flower beds, but close to the house, and close to the fence, were flowering borders, bright now with tulips and daffodils. Janet suddenly thought that Effie was a little like a daffodil herself.

The old builder lay in the great black walnut bed in which his children had been born and in which his wife had died. On the wall above it hung a copy of their wedding certificate, framed and ornamented with true-lovers' knots and clasped hands. On the opposite wall there was a crayon enlargement of a photograph, and Janet knew it at once for Mrs. Deering's. But she had little time to make a survey of the room. Old Deering's eyes claimed her own, caught them, held them.

"Hugh has told you what I want?" He cut in upon her expressions of sorrow to see him ill, her hope for his swift recovery.

"He's told me something of what you want," replied Janet. "You want him to stay and take up your work."

"I want him to stay and share the work with me," the old man corrected

her brusquely. "It's nonsense, my lying here like this. My brain never felt clearer in my life. I never felt sounder. It's an idiotic joke, a bad dream. But unless he stays and consents to be my useless legs for me——"

He broke off and turned his face away from them. The dimity curtains at the windows had been drawn back to let in more light and air, and he stared out into the beauty of the young pearl of a morning, and looked at a robin poised for an instant on a straggling spray of the wistaria.

Janet did not answer. She felt intensely in sympathy with the old man, but her sense of justice was strong. If Hugh did not wish to give up his work in New York, did not wish to make a new start on the less adventurous plane of Berwickbury, it was wrong that he should be coerced by filial feeling. She half wanted to put out her hand and to lay it kindly upon that other hand—big, freckled, hard-fleshed, huge-knuckled—that lay upon the white coverlid. But she knew how little sentiment was to her employer's liking. They must settle their family dispute without her advice or her sympathy. Only she hoped——

"The reason I sent for you"—the old man turned back, as the robin flew away, and faced them, his sharp, keen old blue eyes glittering beneath beetling brows—"is to make the third member of our corporation."

"The third member of your corporation?" Janet repeated stupidly.

"Yes. We've got to incorporate. Hugh'll come around to my way of thinking. He always was a reasonable lad—aye, and a good one—when he was put to the scratch. He'll see his duty. Aye, and more than duty. It'll be his profit, too. I'm going to get that State hospital—I know I'm going to get it. It's thanks to you, Miss Fowler. It was you that spurred me on to the trial; it was you that brought me the

figures I had to beat. But to get it and have the award voided—that would be too much! Hugh, here, will take my place out of doors. I'll say for myself that no one can take my place in the councils. We'll be a corporation—fifty-one shares to me, forty-eight to Hugh, and one to you, to make everything shipshape. What do you say, Miss Fowler? Will you go into it?"

Janet, seated by the bedside, turned her eyes away from the flushed face and tense gaze of the old man and sought the look of the young one seated at the foot of the bed. His head was sunk a little on his chest; his eyelids were lowered. She could not see the blue eyes that were fixed in her thoughts as always laughing; the lips beneath the close-clipped, little reddish mustache were not set in lines of laughter.

Suddenly Hugh raised his head, threw back his shoulders. He met his father's eyes squarely. Whatever his conflict with himself, the father's claims had won. Janet knew it even before he spoke, and she was filled with an unreasoning gladness. He was kind and dutiful, then, as well as compellingly gay!

"I'll do it, father," said Hugh. "I'll go in with you on the hospital gamble. If you don't get it, perhaps the Mellish people will take me back, though they're not very keen on having their men leave them without their exerting the pressure. Anyway, if the thing doesn't pan out as we expect, there'll be plenty to do in New York."

"That's right. It's what I expected you to say, Hughie. And how about you, Miss Fowler?"

Janet smiled.

"I don't think your plan allots me enough of the stock," she said amiably.

Hugh gave a shout of laughter. The old man's weather-beaten face crinkled into a smile.

"We'll see if we can't do a little better by you, then," he said. "Though, as it will be a long day before it's listed on the stock exchanges, I'm thinking you'll be none the poorer for having but a small block of it."

"Still," persisted Janet, "I think you'll have to do better by me than one share. After all, it was altogether my idea!"

Hugh, laughing again, looked at her with a new interest. There was something slightly suggestive of Beatrice's aplomb in her manner, something a little reminiscent of Beatrice's impertinence in her voice. But she did not look in the least like Beatrice as she sat fearlessly fronting the morning light.

"You can have the lawyers here by ten o'clock to draw up the papers," announced the old man. "It was very kind of you, Miss Fowler, to come out here at this time in the morning. But I wanted to have the thing settled and done with. And now, Hugh, if you'll call that nurse, I'll listen to what it was she was saying a while back."

CHAPTER VI.

The next three days were the busiest that Janet had ever known. At the same time, they were the most delightful. Once Hugh had made up his mind where his duty lay, he wasted no moments in regretful looking back. He had telegraphed his resignation to the Mellish people the morning he had reached his decision. After that, he was ready for work.

When the incorporation papers had been made out and filed in the State capitol, he bent himself to the task of studying the plans. Janet, whose interest in them had been so absorbing, was his guide. His trained eye took note of everything; he read the specifications almost more rapidly than she could tell them to him. Together, they

went out to the tract of land that had been selected as a hospital site, and there he sounded, tested, measured, appraised. She arranged consultations for him with all the subcontractors. They did not go out to lunch, but drank milk and ate crackers brought from the dairy lunch room across the street. Janet did not go home to dinner; instead, they went together to a restaurant across the street from the office, all white tile and marble, diversified by placards extolling—and not unjustly—the quality of the eggs and butter and the freshness of the vegetables. They sat opposite each other at the narrow slab of white marble and selected their paper napkins from the pile at one end of the slab. They ate their steak or their chowder, their graham bread, their baked apples or their rice pudding with healthy enough appetite, and yet without much perception of what they were eating.

Their talk was altogether of the work. Of course, there were ample evidences of character, of temperament, even in such impersonal discourse, but neither of them consciously introduced the personal note, or, indeed, was aware of the personal interest. During those crowded two or three days, Janet absolutely forgot the existence of her cousin Beatrice; and Hugh gave no evidence that he was not afflicted with a similar loss of memory. Although they laughed and jested across Bennett's table, although there were flashes that illuminated their natures for each other, these were but sparks struck out in the clash of their minds with the hard details of the job. Sentiment—that is, sentiment as a thing apart from the actual work of the moment, the actual business of life—they did not know at all.

Yet neither of them had ever yet known a period of such exhilaration. It was a significant exhilaration, but its significance was not for them, so ab-

sorbed, so excited, as to be unaware of the absorption and the excitement.

Beneath the surface of Hugh's mind, however, he was greatly aware of Janet. At a later time in his life, when he had leisure to look back, he found that he had always realized her beauty. It had not occurred to him as beauty at first. It was not starry, it was not flowerlike. There was nothing of the queer, flaming orchid of which Beatrice had sometimes reminded him; certainly there was nothing of the early snow-drop, the darkling violet, of which his sister Effie sometimes made him think with tenderness. But—in that later time when he could indulge himself in post-analysis of the situation that existed during those tense days in the office—he suddenly knew that he had always been reminded of a lovely field of wheat when he saw Janet; so wholesome, so orderly, so useful she seemed, and yet lit by lovely lights and shadows.

But that knowledge came later.

Each night, after he had closed the office and had put Janet upon her Oakwood-bound car, he strode briskly home and gave an account of the day's happenings and activities to his father. The old man was exceedingly content with the situation. He was grateful, though in a matter-of-fact way, to Hugh for having come to his rescue. He was interested, he was suggestive, but he obeyed his physician and did not attempt to direct the entire job himself.

"So you think Miss Fowler is a good business woman?" he commented one night upon his son's narrative of events.

"Fine. She has certainly revolutionized your office, father. Do you remember when you were never able to find a bill or a receipt in it? Her filing system is splendid. Not a second wasted in looking for anything."

"Aye, her filing system's good. But no filing system's much account unless there's a better system in the head that



"The reason I sent for you"—the old man turned back and faced them, his sharp, keen old blue eyes glittering beneath beetling brows—"is to make the third member of our corporation."

runs it. She's canny, and she's bonny, too, don't you think?"

"Very nice-looking girl," Hugh conceded absent-mindedly, as he searched for matches. And then, still rather inattentive, he paid her the highest tribute in his power: "She will make some man a good wife one of these days."

A ripple of silvery scorn sounded from the low chair where Effie sat beside the lamp, sewing. Hugh turned and looked at her quizzically.

"Why the laugh, sis?"

"I was laughing because I thought how little she'd appreciate your flattery," answered Effie demurely. "And for my own part, I think she's quite right. It's high time we were hearing more about the sort of men who would some day make good husbands for some women, and less the other way around."

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"Going in for feminism, and all that sort of thing, little brown wren?" asked Hugh indulgently.

Effie's delicate skin flushed; her lips, soft and childlike, set themselves in a straight line.

"And suppose I am?" Defiance informed her manner.

"Oh, no harm at all. Go to it!" Hugh wouldn't dignify the matter by argument. "They're all doing it, all the young women. But most of them come to the same good, old-fashioned end."

"It was a good thing for the house of Deering that Miss Janet Fowler hadn't gone to that good, old-fashioned end before this State-hospital business came up," persisted Effie, ruffling like the bird her brother had named her.

But her menfolk refused to take up the challenge she threw down. They

laughed at her and went on with their talk. Hugh did not think again until the next day of his sister's amusing little outburst of indignation. That was when, looking up from a frowning contemplation of the specifications for waterproof cement, he saw Janet, her back to him, at a filing cabinet across the room. Her shoulders were broad, but not too broad; her waist had the slimness of the athletic, not of the corseted woman. There was a magnificent strength and pliability about her. She would make some man a fine wife some day, Hugh said again to himself, defying Effie, defying Janet herself, defying the whole race of "new women," as he called them in old-fashioned phraseology. A good wife to some man, and a splendid mother to some man's children! And at the thought, there was a sudden stricture in his throat, and he was conscious of a sort of rapturous pounding of blood against his ears.

And then he thought of Beatrice.

It was, however, Mr. Bernard Ryan, and not unassisted nature, who finally revealed the two young people to each other. Mr. Bernard Ryan had begun to grow worried about the bid of his friend and connection, Dolan, of Middlebury or, rather, he had begun to grow worried about Mr. Deering's bid. Subtle messengers of the air—and other messengers not so subtle from the offices of excavators, masons, lumber dealers, steel-construction men and all the rest of the hundred specialized divisions of the building industry—began to tell him that his most dangerous competitor was to be, not Swift, of Hartford, but Deering, of Berwicksbury. Mr. Ryan and Mr. Dolan had no desire to meet this threatened danger by the simple expedient of cutting down their own profits. They were going to need all the profits, they and the gang. It seemed to them better to move by indirection and to elim-

inate competition rather than to meet it.

Mr. Ryan, in consultation with his brother-in-law, hit upon what seemed to them a very neat method of getting rid of the trade peril that threatened. There might be a great social gulf fixed between Boss Ryan, of the Mill Ward, and Mr. Winthrop Hinsdale, of the Oceanic Bonding Company and of many other lofty interests, but in business there are no such social gulfs. Mr. Hinsdale was perfectly approachable to Mr. Ryan. They understood each other quite as well as if they both talked the same dialect, instead of having learned the English language respectively in Riley's Railroad Saloon and Yale University.

The result of their conference was known to Douglas Deering, Incorporated, on Monday, the eleventh of May, at nine o'clock in the morning, when Janet in opening the mail, reached the envelope bearing the letterhead of the Oceanic Bonding Company, Winthrop Hinsdale, President. Never after that morning could any one persuade Janet that there was in the world such a thing as prescience or premonition, for it was with a glad song swelling in her heart and a happy light of confidence brightening her eyes that she slit open the envelope.

Mr. Winthrop Hinsdale was, in his private capacity as an old friend and admirer of Mr. Deering, sincerely grieved to be obliged to inform him that it was out of the question for the Oceanic Bonding Company to go upon his bond for fifty thousand dollars, as informally agreed, in view of the new situation arising out of Mr. Deering's illness, which no one regretted more heartily than Mr. Hinsdale. The bond was to have been extended to a tried and experienced builder whom all Berwicksbury knew to be capable of putting through any contract that he undertook. But that man, with all his

experience and with all of the city's experience of him, lay ill; and the contract, if awarded to him, would be carried out by a young man of whose quality Berwickbury had no knowledge, though of course it had every hope.

Janet's exclamation startled Hugh, busy at his desk. The indignant sound was followed by the scraping of her chair. She stood beside him on the second, her face brilliantly flushed, her eyes aflame. She thrust the paper toward him.

"Read that!" she commanded.

Hugh took the letter and held it for half a minute in his hand, still staring at her, so transfigured by emotion. Angry, she was glorious.

"Read it, read it!" she said again impatiently, and he read.

"Well." He spoke heavily, after he had read the thing twice. "Well, this cooks our goose. There isn't another bonding company here, is there?"

"No. But you aren't going to sit down under it like this?"

"What am I to do? You know as well as I do what it means. It means that the dirty, political-building ring got cold feet at the last minute. They were afraid of us, and so they take the easiest way of knifing us. No one else in town will go on father's bond—our bond, I mean—after this."

"You can't mean to drop it!" she cried passionately.

"I don't want to drop it, of course. But I'm trying to face the fact. I never thought I would be so keen about a job as I've grown to be about this."

"It's your own—that's why. There's no enthusiasm—not much, anyway—about working for other people. But working for oneself— Oh, you mustn't let them get away with this!"

Even in his intensity of feeling at the moment, Hugh almost smiled to hear her, with her high-bred, pure enunciation, slipping into his easy slang.

"You care as much about this job as I do," he told her brusquely, rising and facing her, "and yet you are only an employee here. There's a flaw in your reasoning. Why do you care so intensely? Why do you care, Janet Fowler?"

She looked at him bewilderedly. But she had no time to grope about for reasons.

"I don't know what you're talking about," she cried. "I only know this thing has got to be met. Where are the conditions?"

"The conditions?"

"Yes, the conditions for building concerns desiring to enter this competition."

"Oh! I took them from you, didn't I, to study over at home? I don't think I've put them back. They're still in my pocket." He was already fumbling in the pocket of his coat, hanging on a tree in the corner of the room. From the mass of papers, he produced a long manila envelope. "Here it is."

He brought it back to the desk and together they bent over it, reading paragraph after paragraph with lightning speed. Finally Janet gave a little cry of delight.

"Here it is! I knew there was something beside the bond. 'Every bid to be accompanied by a bond for fifty thousand dollars or by a certified check for the same amount, said bond or check to remain in the possession of the State treasurer, credited to the building committee of the State board of health'" she was skipping, leaping across words and stipulations—" 'until such time as the State hospital for the insane—completed—accordance with—specifications—said bond—check forfeited—'" She raised a radiant face toward Hugh. "There it is, you see! A certified check will do just as well as the bond."

"How many certified checks for

fifty thousand dollars do you think I carry around with me?"

Hugh spoke impatiently and yet could scarcely refrain from laughter. She had revealed herself, for all the perfection of her business technique, as feminine, impulsive, unrestrained by fact, absurd, she the perfect example of the business woman!

"How much can you command?" she demanded, intensely practical once more.

"I've accumulated, in all my years of labor, four one-thousand-dollar bonds—steel, so I suppose they're perfectly good. And I have a savings-bank account of about seven hundred dollars. My drawing account at the Guaranty Trust is just as low as they will allow it to be—it's about three hundred dollars."

"Then you've got about five thousand dollars," said Janet briskly. "How much can you borrow?"

"My dear girl, I can't borrow any. That five thousand covers not only my actual assets, but my credit. Nobody would lend me a sou unless I put up a bond for security. I haven't any influential connections who want to back me."

"I have twelve thousand dollars in bonds, I think," said Janet. She colored and added, "Probably I oughtn't to have them. It's money saved out of the wreck when my father went smash. Probably it really belongs to some one else—to you and your father, I dare say; in justice, I mean, not in law, for it didn't really come out of father's estate, but out of my maternal grandfather's. But that makes seventeen thousand dollars. Your father's balance, after he meets this week's pay roll, will be about four thousand, five hundred. You see, we've raised more than twenty thousand dollars already."

"That's a long way from fifty thousand, even if I were willing to have you impoverish yourself, or to leave

myself absolutely stranded, or to put the concern in a position where it couldn't meet the pay roll at the end of next week—none of which things I am willing to do. No, we might as well face it. They haven't left us time to scurry around and get ourselves into the running again." He spoke firmly, with an air of finality.

"You don't care about it!" She looked at him angrily, passionately. "You don't really care about the job or the business!"

"I've already told you that I care about it immensely, more than I've ever cared about anything before in my life. But, being a man, I've learned to accept facts. The fact is that we can't scrape together the money in any possible way, and that there isn't time between now and to-morrow night, when the bids are sealed, to get another bond. You might as well face it."

"I'll face it to-morrow night, when the bids are sealed and ours isn't in. I won't face it one second before then."

She spoke through set lips, and she faced him, splendidly obstinate. He shrugged his shoulders, as he turned back toward his desk.

"It's a pity to waste your energy in folly," he told her coolly. "Where is that letter about the hotel at White-stone Point we're asked to bid on?"

Janet walked across the room to the correspondence file. She brought back the letter and laid it on his desk.

"Here it is. Do you mean that you're going to stay here, and go on with the business, even with this big chance gone?"

"It's the best I can do for the present."

He did not look up from the letter, which he was spreading across the desk. She stood for a second beside him, looking down at the well-shaped head, with its thick, reddish hair which only close-cropping kept from being curly.

The intense excitement of the few minutes preceding had slightly unnerved her. There were sudden tears in her eyes, but she blinked them back. And at the same time she relegated to the background of her conscience the thought that it had been her unjustifiable insistence which had dragged him back to this small town away from the larger opportunities of New York.

There was silence in the office for ten or fifteen minutes, except for the rustling of papers. Then Hugh spoke suddenly.

"I forgot that I shall have to tell my father," he said.

"Promise me not to tell him until night," cried Janet, suddenly aflame again.

"You're expecting a miracle to happen during the day? Very well, I won't tell him until to-night. I hope it won't give him a setback. My dear girl, don't look so tragic! It's all in the day's work. This is what business is—to be on the very verge of big things and to see them slip away from you. Next time, it'll be the other fellow's turn to lose. If you women are going into the commercial world, you've got to learn that lesson. Take it as it comes."

"But don't take it until it does come," repeated Janet obstinately. Then she added: "May I have the rest of the day off? If you've decided to do nothing more about the State hospital, you won't be very busy."

"Certainly you may have the day off," replied Hugh, looking at her in some amazement. "But—but I'm blessed if I see what you're going to do with it."

"I'm going," replied Janet, very distinctly and very amiably, as she speared her hat onto her thick braids of brown

hair, "to do my spring shopping. It's what young ladies always do at this season of the year."

And with these words, which seemed to be informed with a spirit of great hostility toward him, and which Mr. Hugh Deering interpreted as satire—though for the life of him he did not see why he merited that particular form of rebuke—she marched proudly out of the room. It seemed strangely empty after her departure. He thought about her a good deal more than he was accustomed to think when she was present with him. For luncheon, he went, not to Bennett's dairy resort, but to the grillroom of Berwickbury's chief downtown hotel, and he regaled himself more sumptuously than he had done since he had left New York. But the English mutton chops were rather flavorless and the English ale in the stone mug was but a bitter brew.

Spring shopping indeed! Of course she had been trying to sit upon him, to put him, as it were, in his place. But what had she meant? And wasn't it rather unkind, whatever her quarrel with him, to leave him alone on this particular day when he had that disappointment, that really calamitous disappointment, about the hospital to bear? Of course what he had told her was true enough—disappointments like these were part of the daily routine in business; there was no use being tragic about them. Still, would it not have been more truly womanly of her to have stayed and to have shed a little comfort on the situation?

That was the trouble with these modern women. They were very efficient and all that, but, after all, wasn't the old-fashioned anointer of wounds, bestower of balm, more truly useful, as well as vastly more lovable?

Conserving the Nation's Spirit

By Grace M. Sissons

THE young French soldiers smile even in the face of Verdun. And they write home, not of hatred and vengeance, but of the nightingale's song, or of the plumes hidden in the long grass where they are lying awaiting the enemies' charge. Indeed, these letters and diaries found on the dead defenders are characterized by a kind of exalted gayety. They understood well—the young writers—the horror in front of them. But back of them was the nation's spirit kept radiant by their comrades, the bright-souled women of France. Had it not been for this resilience of spirit, France, as the world knows, could not have withstood the terrible odds against her.

Conserving the national sanity and cheerfulness is peculiarly the woman's work in America also, where, as in France, the men make comrades of their wives and sisters. The best conservation in this, as in material things, is not in withholding, but in producing and using all possible means of good cheer. It is mistaken zeal, for instance, to think that we should refrain from the joyous things of life, its everyday amusements and festivities, because war is upon us. Indeed, if ever we needed the refreshment of wholesome pleasures and normal human happiness, it is at the present, when we face the benumbing—and inevitable—anxiety and grief of war.

Our national spirit is the product of a hundred years and more of American living and thinking. And whatever influences have helped to make it rich in trust and hope must be cherished now. For we shall need all the forces of optimism and faith, not only to win the fight, but in the weary work of rebuilding the country after the destruction has passed.

The feminist movement of the last few years, with its network of clubs and other organizations gathering the women of the land into vast sisterhoods, has given the in-

dividual woman an undreamed-of opportunity for molding public thought. Formerly, when her sphere of influence reached little beyond the home, her personal opinion and attitude toward national questions didn't matter so much. If she allowed her spirit to sicken with discouragement and despondency, the affliction was quarantined, so to speak, in her own house. It is quite different now, with societies and guilds and auxiliaries offering woman on every hand a forum for the free and unhampered expression of her thoughts.

Under these conditions, should women find fault with the government for imagined partiality, or try to minimize the wrongs done by the enemy to the principles of humanity, in order to justify their own half-hearted service, they would spread the spirit of discontent and disloyalty like a contagious disease. But if they take a high pride in being called upon to give deeply, and if they refuse to allow their hearts to be consumed with hatred toward the enemy, and if they are glad America has stood the supreme test of being willing to sacrifice her material comfort for an ideal, then they will have done their "bit," right nobly, in preserving that rare quality of spirit wherein lies America's true greatness.

For, after all, history gives a nation its place in the sun not because of its numbers and riches, but for the quality of its spirit. Greece, smallest of States, is civilization's most cherished legacy, while Attila and his unnumbered hordes are but a shuddering memory. It has happened more than once that a nation has been victorious in arms, but defeated in spirit. The great disaster is not in material losses, but in the destruction wrought by war—even victorious war—upon the people's character.

Truly it would be a spiritual tragedy if we who remain at home should suffer the nation's spirit to become saturated with morbidness and corroded with hatred, while our young men lie in the trenches to keep its honor bright. The women of America must watch that this calamity come not upon us.

The Road of Dreams

By Marion Short

Author of "The Girl at Copperdip," "Hallie Nobody," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

A story of ideals—of the sort we especially like to give to our readers.

AT a siding near Royalmont station, Ezra helped load the Hurley horses onto the special car awaiting them. As a glossy bay approached the runway, the boy sprang forward to bury his cheek in the animal's thick mane. Prince was his favorite of all the stud.

"Good-by, old sport! Ezra will never tickle your pretty hide with a currycomb again."

Prince ducked his head to nose the stableboy's hand, avid of the lump of sugar he often found there, and Ezra had not neglected to have the titbit ready for him.

The departure of the horses meant his own much-desired release from the Hurley stables, but for the moment he felt only the sadness of farewell, of closing a familiar chapter never to be opened again. His heart lightened, however, before the train, running blithely away from its own smoke, had disappeared around the curve of a hill. He addressed the pine-covered heights in the distance with passionate earnestness.

"Just give me my start in life—that's all I ask! I'll take care of the rest."

It was not the first time he had uttered that combined prayer and promise to the powers that be. He had murmured it often while grooming Prince, or when preparing a mount for some member of the family, but most frequently of all as he had bent over his scrapbook, devised from a carriage maker's catalogue.

The carriage maker would have met with a jarring surprise had he chanced to turn those pages. Ezra had remorselessly pasted over the display vehicles with subjects more to his liking. Every time he came upon a newspaper illustration of one of those tall, many-storied buildings beginning to change the sky line of New York, scissors and mucilage were brought into operation and into the scrapbook it went.

Ezra had worked for John Hurley two years. It had taken as long as that to pay off the bills his mother's dreadful and hopeless illness had imposed upon him, but now he was at last even with the world and free to travel the road of his dreams. Ignoring the obstacles that might lie between, Ezra's imagination leaped a nebulous space of years, and he saw himself a successful designer and builder of towering miracles of stone.

When he got back to the stables, his employer was there looking for him.

"Hullo, Ezra! It's a pretty empty-looking place, isn't it, with my string of horses missing?" Ezra agreed that it was. "But a year will soon roll around again, bringing us back from California," Hurley continued cheerfully, "and then I'll have new stalls built in for the thoroughbreds I intend to pick up while I'm gone."

Ezra watched John Hurley admiringly as he strolled about for a final inspection of his stables. He had a handsome, dominant face and eyes that seemed to look far, like an eagle's, and

there was something in the swing of his military figure that gave him the air of an officer leading a division of infantry. The thick, wavy hair, rolling back from his high forehead, showed only a hint of gray, and with his fine, outdoor complexion, he looked ten younger than his fifty years.

He had come now to a long line of upright glass cases. In them hung a lavish assortment of imported harnesses, novelty stirrups, saddles of all descriptions, expensively mounted whips, spurs, and riding crops. A white Russian double harness attracted his attention, and he examined it with almost an affectionate interest.

"I'm going to appoint you special custodian of all this stuff while I'm away, Ezra," he said to the boy, who was following him at a respectful distance, "for I wouldn't feel safe to leave it in any one's hands but yours."

Ezra felt suddenly like a boy in long trousers forced back into knickerbockers.

"But I thought I was free now to leave any time I wanted to, and I'm starting for New York to-morrow," he said.

John Hurley's level brows arched slightly. He disliked opposition of any kind, exacting unquestioning obedience from his employees. His voice, when he spoke again, held the nearest approach to anger the stableboy had ever heard.

"But I have said I wished you to remain. Isn't your job here easy enough?"

"Of course it's easy enough, Mr. Hurley," Ezra said deferentially. "That isn't it. But I've waited for a long time to——"

He was not permitted to continue.

"If it's a matter of money," added Hurley, outwardly affable again, "I'm willing to double your present wage. You are needed here. I expect my daughter's health to improve rapidly in that fine California climate, and in case of our quick return, I want every piece of leather or metal on the place in perfect condition and ready for use."



"Good-by, old sport! Ezra will never tickle your pretty hide with a currycomb again."

He paused long enough to test the suppleness of a carriage whip before dropping it back into its rack. He had no idea of permitting a stableboy to interfere with his orderly plans.

"I'll take a lot of satisfaction, Ezra," he began again, "in knowing that some one I can trust is here on the place to keep everything shipshape and to look out for tramps, drunken incendiaries, and the like. You'll lose nothing by it in the long run."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Hurley," Ezra answered regretfully, but with a certain underlying stubbornness, "but I've just got to get down to New York."

"To learn some trade, I suppose?" guessed Hurley. "But, even so, you're only a youngster, and there's plenty of time ahead for that sort of thing."

A flush mounted to Ezra's forehead. His figure was indeed slim and youthful, and his face that of a boy in his teens, but though he had been slow to mature outwardly, the day before had marked the beginning of his twenty-fifth year, and he felt it was high time for a well-fed, but unprogressive period of his life to end.

"You're mistaken about my age," he said quietly, "for I'm not a youngster, by any means. I want a job with a carpenter to begin with, and then——"

His treasured scrapbook lay across the corner of a watering trough near by. He had the impulse to reach out for it and make known his long-cherished ambition, but there was that in his employer's look that froze the warmth of his enthusiasm and caused him to step between Hurley and the telltale volume instead.

"Youngster or no youngster," smote upon his ears with biting distinctness, "you will hardly fail to remember how I gave you work when you were worn out from caring for your mother and not worth your salt, and that I kept you on until you'd pulled yourself together again."

"Why, of course I remember all that," acknowledged Ezra, his heart beginning to thump apprehensively, "but——"

"Then don't make me distrust your gratitude by becoming an ingrate now," interrupted Hurley sharply.

Ezra winced as if he had felt the stroke of a whip. His mother, dying, had impressed upon him certain ideals of honor. Was he indeed in danger of being false to that precious heritage?

"Why, I want to give you a square deal of course, Mr. Hurley," he said with slow seriousness, "and if you think it's really up to me to stay on for a few months more, I—I'll do it."

"Now you're talking!" exclaimed Hurley, relieved. His tactics had succeeded; they generally did. He beckoned Ezra to accompany him to the huge open door of the stables. "Remember, boy," he said, laying a hand on the boy's shoulder, "that I want everything kept immaculate and ready for service at a moment's notice. Be a good soldier, and promise me to stick to your post until I come back to release you."

Something in his tone struck thrillingly to Ezra's heart. He was no longer a mere stableboy, but a soldier hearing the command of his superior officer. A soldier was expected to make sacrifices, of course, and that without whimpering. His heels clicked together as he straightened up. His hand even went to his cap in a sort of fumbling salute.

The magnificent home in the Adirondacks once closed—it had been built by John Hurley expressly to please young Mrs. Page, the delicate widowed daughter who had presided at his table since Mrs. Hurley's demise—Ezra missed the manifold activities that had been his before. There were no playful ponies to bring to the great stone steps for the use of little Preston, Hurley's idolized grandson; no mettled

colts to break to the saddle; no handfuls of blooded horses to take out for exercise over the mountain roads. But even when the first year of the family's stay in the West had gone by, and six months of another had elapsed, Ezra still schooled himself to be patient. Benson, the caretaker, invariably answered his anxious inquiries with the news that the improvement in Mrs. Page's condition continued to be much slower than Hurley had hoped, and Ezra sought consolation in his scrapbook, and in the architectural magazine for which he had subscribed.

Finally, however, word came of a change of doctors, and the hope of a speedy return to the home in the East.

True to his word, Ezra brushed and oiled and polished and aired all the paraphernalia left in his care. He made the glass doors of the cases shine like crystal, and carefully varnished the woodwork. He sometimes pictured the stable doors sliding back suddenly, revealing the soldierly presence of his employer. He caught the challenge of those eagle eyes, and heard himself saying:

"All ready for use, sir. Is it the silver-mounted or the tan unglazed?"

And so, somehow, between work and dreams, the furtive years slid by until Ezra was thirty; and still Mrs. Page continued her fight for health, and John Hurley had not returned.

"But of course, I can't marry just a stableboy," Ezra's sweetheart told him frankly. He had met Lola Morris at one of the village dances he occasionally permitted himself to attend when, for a few hours, a trustworthy substitute was available. "I wouldn't keep on with you for a minute if I didn't believe in your genius, dear. I know you're going to be a big architect some day, but—well, you must remember that time doesn't stand still, and you mustn't stand still, either."

"I expect any day now to get away,"

Ezra told her confidently. "I've been studying along alone here the best I could, and once Mr. Hurley releases me, I'll work at high pressure to make up for my slow speed now."

Lola could not have defined her reasons for falling in love with Ezra. She had treated him kindly, but with much condescension at first, and no one could have been more amazed than she at the promptness with which she accepted him when he proposed. True, with his lithe figure and his warm brown eyes with their heavy lashes, he was exceptionally good looking, but whether it was his appearance or a certain big, elemental simplicity in his make-up that charmed her most, she could not determine.

Manlike, Ezra never stopped to analyze his reasons for loving her. He could not help it, and did not want to help it. That was sufficient for him.

"As soon as I've made any kind of a start, Lola," he told her one day, after a very optimistic letter had been reported upon by Benson, "we'll be married. I've saved all I've earned and—"

"My dear boy," interrupted Lola, with the superior patience sometimes assumed by those who have a background of culture toward those who have not, "don't you know you have to have an expensive technical training to become an architect? Of course there's still time to acquire that training, but until you do, any thought of marriage is out of the question. And though I'm more than willing to wait for you, Ezzums"—"Ezzums" was her pet name for him—"naturally no girl cares to wait forever."

"That you'll wait at all for an ignorant chap like me when you're such a wonderful girl—a school-teacher and all that—is what I can't understand," and Ezra kissed her forehead reverently.

The next Sunday he called to see



"Oh, you are a genius—just as I've believed from the first—and now I'm willing to wait for you forever and forever!"

Lola at the home of the farmer with whom she was boarding.

"Don't you want to stroll up to the place with me?" he proposed. "I've something to show you."

"Of course," smiled Lola, slipping into a white sweater and smoothing back her abundant brown hair. She had a piquant face, round and dimpled and soft, though her alert, intelligent eyes rather belied that softness.

"Why," she exclaimed delightedly, when they had climbed the hill, "the family must be coming home, sure enough! They're beginning to have the place fixed up, aren't they? Ezzums,

that's the loveliest thing in the shape of a summerhouse I ever saw! The way it sets between those trees makes it a perfect picture!"

"I'm glad you like it," answered Ezra, his smile like sunshine. "That last storm completed the ruin of the old one and littered up the grounds with its remains, so I got together what lumber I could and built this."

"But it's so artistic—and—and imposing!" pronounced Lola, backing off to get a better view of it. "It's just in keeping with the big house and the surroundings generally. Who designed it?" she concluded, rather breathlessly.

"Why, it wasn't designed, exactly," replied Ezra, with slow thoughtfulness. "I just made it to fit where it stands and—well, just sort of felt it out, I suppose."

Lola flew at him and hugged him hard, heedless that the eyes of the caretaker were upon her.

"Oh, you are a genius—just as I've believed from the first—and now I'm willing to wait for you forever and forever!"

The letter Benson was expecting, stating when the family would start for home, did not arrive as promised, but a consignment of new carriage robes and Indian blankets came instead, and Benson and Ezra agreed it was a sure indication that the senders intended following immediately.

Ezra, repairing to the stables, went over all the leather and brass, the nickel, ivory, silver, and steel with special care.

"It's for the last time!" he said, and felt the weight on his shoulders loosening. He had already packed the precious scrapbook away in his trunk when a telegram came, stating that Mrs. Page had died suddenly, that John Hurley was ill from the shock and the homecoming unavoidably delayed.

"So there's nothing to do but wait a little longer," Ezra explained to Lola, as he saw her off at the station for her new position in a school up State. "I can't throw Mr. Hurley down when he's in trouble like this. He reached out a helping hand to me after mother's death, you know. But there'll be nothing on earth to hold them there when Mr. Hurley is himself again, and I know they'll come home."

And so two more years went by. True, during them, Ezra had written an urgent letter asking for release, but the gold watch Hurley sent him, along with a courteous personal letter begging him to stay just the few weeks longer required to get the writer on his feet

again, had the desired effect. Ezra smothered once more his insistent desire for freedom. Loyalty, even loyalty strained to the breaking point, he told himself, could not in the end prove a cause for regret. He took a snapshot of the summerhouse and inclosed it to Hurley with his reply.

Then, suddenly, Lola got married and sent him word of it.

"I've been thinking it all over, Ezra dear," she wrote, by way of excuse, "and I've figured out that by the time you get started as an architect, I'll be worn out from the strain of teaching school. Frankly, if I must teach children, I'd rather they'd be children of my own. George's father is the most prosperous lawyer in the county, and has made George a partner in the firm, so there was nothing in the way of our getting married at once."

II.

That night Ezra, a boy at heart, sat out in the summerhouse and wept. They were the first tears he had shed since when, as a little chap, he had fallen from a tree and broken his arm. Lola had been his first and only sweetheart, and somehow he had trusted in her faith as he had expected her to trust in his.

After that he lost ambition for a weary time, and the scrapbook and journals were alike neglected. Besides which, his hours were much occupied with other things. Benson had taken French leave, and it seemed impossible to fill his place. Ezra, for the greater part of the time, found himself in charge not only of the stables, but the house as well.

One day some sight-seers came plodding up the rather difficult road that wound from the highway below, leaving their automobile to wait for them.

"May we walk through the stables?" they asked, after viewing the valley and river scene that made one of the

chief attractions of the place, and Ezra answered in the affirmative. He politely led the party along the well-kept pebbled road to the stable doors.

"Why, how spick and span everything looks!" exclaimed a pretty young girl. "Aunt Charlotte, I thought you said the people had been away for ten years."

"They have," answered the woman addressed, whom Ezra recognized as the one who had taken Lola's vacant place in the village school. "I'm right, am I not?" she inquired of him.

"Yes," he said, reddening, he knew not why, as the girl's eyes rested on him curiously. "Nearly eleven, in fact."

"And do you live here all alone like a hermit?" inquired the girl wonderingly. "Why, how do you stand it?"

"It's my job," answered Ezra shortly, and turned away.

The desperate telegram he sent Preston Page, soon after, was returned to him unopened. He thought its non-delivery meant the long-deferred homecoming until a letter reached him from Japan. In it young Page stated that his grandfather had been called there on some urgent banking business, which, when concluded, would remove the final barrier in the way of their immediate return to Royalmont.

When at last servants arrived at the big house, having been sent on in advance to see that it was thoroughly aired, fresh bedding installed, storage boxes unpacked, and all the rest of it, it was just fifteen years, lacking a few days, from the time of the family's start for California.

Of late Ezra had been suffering from a strange inertia, an indifference to past or future, but with so much bustling life about him, he began to get back some of his former interest in things. He put in even more time than usual on the fittings of those familiar cases and their contents. The woodwork was polished and flawless, the glass

mirror bright, everything immaculate and in its proper place.

The honk of an automobile, one morning, brought him from his work to the little square window above the manger in Prince's former stall. A touring car had stopped outside the gates, and in it sat four men. The driver was Preston Page.

Ezra ran quickly to open those gates, for the old gentleman in the tonneau, broken, enfeebled, incredibly changed in appearance, was still plainly his employer, and he wished to welcome him.

"Hello, old chap!" called out Page jovially as he saw him coming. "You've grown so heavy I'd hardly know you. That's from having had it a bit too easy around here, I suppose." He swung round in his seat to address his grandfather. "Dad!" he shouted, his lips close to the old man's ear. "This is Ezra! Don't you remember him? Ezra!"

"Eh?" Hurley's shaking hand holloed itself at the side of his head, and his fretful eyes never left the handsome face of his grandson. "What d'say?"

"I say—this is Ezra—stableboy—'general-utility man,' as the actors say. You remember Ezra?"

But the grandfather answered with the pitiful querulousness of age and broken health.

"It's Ezra—certainly—Ezra. I heard what you said—I'm not so deaf as you think I am—but I'm cold. I want some broth. When are we going to have some broth?"

"Open those gates a little wider, will you, Ezra?" said Page, in the exact tone of quiet command once used by Hurley. "I want to run this car into the garage."

"Garage!" The word fell strangely on Ezra's ear. However, he opened the creaking gates to their full width, and then followed the car to the stables.

Preston Page had brought the ma-

chine to a halt in the exact middle of the vast, empty floor.

"Hey, fellows," he laughed, "doesn't this place look like an old museum of antiquity, ready for the bones of the obsolete horses?"

consciously he opened his mouth and made it.

"Everything in perfect order, sir, and ready for use at a moment's notice."

"Why," exclaimed young Page, amused, "you've taken the trouble to go over all the old stuff, haven't you? It looks fit for a milliner's window."

"Twice a week for fifteen years," said Ezra, and fixed his gaze on the old man who had told him to be a soldier. "I have kept my promise to you, Mr. Hurley," he said, standing erect and addressing that stooped figure in the tonneau.

The old man blinked his red-rimmed eyes.

"Why doesn't some one see to it that I have my broth?" he mumbled fretfully, and that was all.

Ezra, dazed, stood quite



"It's Ezra—certainly—Ezra. I heard what you said—I'm not so deaf as you think I am—but I'm cold. I want some broth."

He waved his automobile goggles in the direction of the long platform, above which shone, in holiday splendor, the glass cases and their contents.

Ezra heard the question, but without grasping the tenor of it. He had waited long to make a speech prepared years and years before, and almost un-

still. Hurley's grandson, with the suppleness of athletic youth, suddenly flung himself from the car and across to the glass cases, throwing one of them open. He dragged out a patent-leather harness and gave a tug or two at the straps. Something cracked like a toy pistol as he did so.

"Rotten, timeworn, n. g., of course, just as I supposed! Well, with my five cars to be housed, I wouldn't have a horse on the place, anyhow, and I intend to turn these stables into a first-class garage!" He circled about with outstretched arms. "I say, but it's fine and roomy here! Even better than I thought."

Involuntarily, Ezra edged toward that line of glittering cases over which he had stood guard so long. His throat felt thick and hot. He could hardly speak, but his face remained impassive. He pointed to another well-filled case.

"But what are you going to do with all these?" he asked, his hurt eyes on the careless ones of the Hurley heir.

"Sell them for old junk—dump them in the ash can! What else could I do? They're out of date, cracked and rotten! I say, old fellow, what a waste of time to keep it all up the way you have! Yes, grandfather, for Heaven's sake stop nagging! You'll have your broth now in a minute." He helped Hurley from the car, and then faced the man who had sat beside him. "Now, Mr. Architect, I want you to turn yourself loose and convert my stables into the finest private garage in the State of New York. That's what I'm aiming at. Come out here after lunch and get your bearings. Old Ezra will show you around."

For some moments after they had gone, Ezra stood quite still where they had left him. The line of glass cases met his gaze with the fixed mockery of dead eyes. "Old" Ezra, Hurley's grandson had called him, and, remembering it, the thought of his wasted years swept over him in a dismal flood. Of what avail had it all been? And now he was almost forty—"old" Ezra! Somehow he had never realized before that youth was indeed forever past. The cloud-wreathed buildings of his

dreams collapsed in hopeless ruins about his feet.

Not far away stood a desk in an alcove. Ezra crossed to it and opened the right-hand drawer. It held the pistol once given him by John Hurley to repel the approach of tramps or suspicious characters. He had never used the weapon but once, and that was to end the life of a faithful dog that had outlived his usefulness. He pictured how, on hearing the report of the pistol, young Page would probably rush out, napkin in hand, to inquire if a new tire had exploded.

"By Jove, old Ezra has done for himself!" he would exclaim, and perhaps wonder why.

Ezra placed the muzzle of the pistol against his temple. From deep in his throat he laughed.

"Fifteen years thrown into the junk heap—fifteen cracked and rotten years!"

He pulled the trigger. Crowning, bitterest joke of all, the weapon was rigid from rust!

Some one was coming. Hastily Ezra thrust his hand behind him.

"You're the identical chap I'm looking for," smilingly cried the architect, walking in. "I told them, just now, we couldn't do better than to follow the lines of that summerhouse in building the garage. Mr. Hurley has got thawed out, and he tells me you designed and built it—that architecture is your bug. If that's so, I've a place for you in my office, if you want it—a place ready and waiting."

Ezra, fumblingly enough, managed to slide the pistol into his hip pocket, unobserved.

"I—you—I'm not too old?" he stammered.

"Too old?" echoed the architect, waving away the suggestion. "Why, genius isn't acquainted with age!"

The Tango Lizard

By Caroline Lockhart

Author of "The Man from the Bitter Roots," "The Lady Doc," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

He came out of the West—and he proves it, although he is anything but the typical Western hero. A story rich in humor and its delineation of human nature.

MRS. SAVAGE'S sun-blistered face was eloquent of disapproval each time her son clucked and chirped at the horses he was driving, but she pressed her lips tightly together and said nothing.

They had driven to town in comparative silence and were returning in the same fashion, for neither had anything to say that was of the slightest interest to the other.

Mrs. Savage sometimes looked at her son with the perplexed eyes with which a lioness that had given birth to a rabbit might have regarded its offspring, but more often, as now, it was in grim condemnation.

She twitched nervously at the brim of her Stetson hat and said finally, making an obvious effort to speak without irritation:

"Wake 'em up, Clifford. Use the whip."

He obeyed by slapping their broad backs with the lines.

"Gimme them reins!" She snatched them from him wrathfully. "Is there any way of learnin' you to drive short o' killin' you? You've about ruined every team I got, cluckin' and chirpin' at 'em! When you speak, let 'em know you mean it. I'd fuss with my grandmother for slappin' a horse with the lines. You ain't a lick o' sense, seems like. Git up and change seats with me."

She elbowed him so vigorously that his little stiff-brimmed straw hat fell off and rolled into the sagebrush.

"Hop down there and git your dude lid and be quick about it!" she ordered crossly.

The slender youth climbed over the wheel, recovered his hat, and stood by the roadside looking up at her resentfully.

"You've no right to talk to me like that!"

"No? Why haven't I?" She regarded him with her hard, steady stare.

"Because I'm twenty-one to-day. I'm a man!"

"Then act like one. To-morrow you start harrowin' that south forty or you put on petticoats and be done with it."

"You shan't insult me any more." His voice sounded as if he were going to cry, and he made a fist by doubling his thumb under his fingers.

"What was you thinkin' of doin'?" dryly.

"I'm not going back to the ranch! I hate it!"

"Aimin' to go any place in particular?"

He returned haughtily:

"You needn't worry about me."

"I shan't," curtly. "Get up!" The cut she gave with the whip made the horses strain the traces.

Right there mother and son parted.

Clifford walked to town, bought himself a straw suit case, and withdrew the hundred dollars he had on deposit, while Mrs. Savage, looking like an angry grenadier, drove home alone, sit-



ting very erect on the high spring seat of the wagon.

Mrs. Savage had many achievements to her credit, among which was having built up the best-paying horse ranch in the State, but there was only one thing of which she boasted and it was that she came of a proud and peevish race who "took back talk from nobody."

Her grandfather had been one of Quantrell's raiders; her father had been a recognized leader among the rustlers in a cattle war that is a part of the State's history; it had required fifty men to take an uncle out of the hills and land him in the penitentiary; and when it came to branding a "slick," in her younger days Mrs. Savage's rope had been as long as any of them.

She stood six feet two in her carpet slippers, and if she had any distinctly feminine trait, no one had discovered it. Without vanity, she also loathed housework, and when compelled to cook, it was with an expression which suggested that she was about to kick the stove over. She sewed as if she were mending harness.

Yet "Big Liz," as she was called, when well out of hearing, had had her romance—a romance as much out of the ordinary as her personality.

He had been a Baptist colporteur wearing white lawn neckties and distributing Bibles from a covered wagon through an unregenerate State. He had stopped overnight and been delayed for two weeks by bad roads. Spring and propinquity had done the rest; at the end of the two weeks they had been married.

The colporteur had been drowned shortly after, fording Owl Creek during the rise. One mule had kicked itself loose and returned to the ranch, the other had washed into the willows; and there had been swollen Bibles in the eddies for a month; while the missionary himself had come up so far be-

low and so long afterward that they had buried him where they had taken him out.

Then Clifford had arrived on schedule and had received his father's name, which was an unexpected evidence of sentiment, since the eldest in Mrs. Savage's family had always been called Bill.

It had been apparent, nearly as soon as he could walk, that a name so vigorous as Bill would have been much like calling a pickaninny "Pearl." His dearest treasure had been a cape rolled to make a doll. He had yowled when he was put into trousers. He had loved his teacher and his school, and his mark had seldom been less than one hundred in deportment. He had washed his neck without being hounded and had changed his shirt of his own accord. At twelve, he had signed the pledge, and at sixteen, he had joined the church. As an active member of the Social Purity League, he had helped break up the village plague spot. The ladies relied on his judgment in choosing gowns, and he had a gift for crocheting which, when there was any question, enabled him to know whether one should purl two or three.

Neither his high moral character nor his talents awakened any enthusiasm in Mrs. Savage's unresponsive breast.

Clifford, on his part, winced every time he saw her at the woodpile in her cardigan jacket, short denim skirt, and woolen socks wrinkling above the tops of her stout brogans, swinging an ax with such vigor that the chips all but obscured the sun. It pained him to see her pitching hay, juggling hundred-pound grain sacks, branding colts. In other words, mother and son were equally ashamed of each other, and with nothing in common, the crisis reached on the road from town was bound to come.

Thereafter she never mentioned his name, and showed less outward concern

over his departure than over a bad wire cut on a good colt.

Mrs. Savage was plowing out an irrigation ditch when a neighbor stopped and brought the first news of Clifford. He imparted it with malicious zest.

"Some folks I got back East in Iowa jest wrote that Cliff is broke."

Mrs. Savage went on scraping dirt from the plowshare without looking up.

"They tell me he went into partnership with a man milliner, and it seems like the style changed from feathers to flowers after they'd loaded up with a big stock and——"

Mrs. Savage straightened and thundered:

"What the dickens you comin' here for to tell me that? Get ep!"

The size of the clod she threw at the team would have knocked them cold if it had not happened that they were mules.

However, it was all true enough, and after many ups and downs, which were mostly downs, Clifford reached New York, along with the tango and the maxixe.

As soon as he had learned to dance, it was plain that the elevator which caged him from seven in the morning until six at night could not hold him long. If he shot passengers beyond their floors, small wonder, for his brain was singing, "Slide, slide, cross step, kick. Double cortez, single cortez, scissor step, waltz."

The not unexpected result was that on Saturday night Clifford was presented with a can along with his yellow envelope. He laughed in the cashier's face, for it saved him the trouble of resigning in order to accept a position as instructor at the Palais de Danse.

His success was immediate and pronounced. Such distinction! Such grace! He dignified these dances of ill repute.

The proprietor raised the price on him from two dances for a quarter to fifteen cents straight, and the ladies fought for him at that. They danced him to attenuation, but he remained a spirited, gladsome sight, for he loved his work.

At the height of his success, Clifford fell in love with a flapper.

It was proof of his sincerity that, with as wide a choice as a sultan's and from among ladies with incomes of their own, his preference should fall upon Ray La Fay, who was able to make ten dollars a week only by boning collars overtime.

To all outward appearance, there was nothing about the very young lady with the euphonious name to distinguish her from countless thousands of her type seen on Broadway.

Miss La Fay was thin and graceful, with ankles like an antelope's. She wore white boots and a blue serge suit with a skirt so short that it did not require an exceedingly high wind to give the innocent bystander a notion as to her taste in lingerie. An artistically and frankly painted face, with two bright, inquiring eyes, peered at the world from beneath a narrow, drooping brim.

Miss La Fay was frivolous, admitting candidly that she lived for clothes and shows and to dance, yet Clifford found so much that was worthy in her that his affections never wavered, once he had declared himself.

The one flaw in what otherwise would have been perfect happiness was the implacable enmity of Frank B. Zeist, the local representative of a Middle West pickle-and-catsup house, who loved Miss La Fay as desperately as Clifford did himself.

It took time, but finally jealousy, low cunning, and intrigue accomplished their hellish work. The machinations of his rival brought results, and once more Clifford heard the familiar rattle



At the height of his success, Clifford fell in love with a flapper.

of the can and once more he laughed. He was too well established to be jobless long. The management would regret its injustice when it saw its patronage falling off.

The dissipation of the illusion that the spotlight followed him wherever he went was one of the painful experiences of his life. Not only was his name unknown to the persons to whom he applied, but the interviews were frequently harsh.

The time came, and quickly, when

the landlady no longer dimpled at his jokes, and the laundryman, endeavoring to collect, talked like a brute.

The day he walked forty blocks to save five cents, Clifford was in a mood when anything, death itself, seemed preferable to his present state. The only solace that he had was the knowledge that Ray La Fay was true, her affections standing even the difficult test of an occasional small loan.

It was in this frame of mind that he spent his last nickel riding home. His

chin was sunk upon his chest as, with indifferent eyes, he read the headlines of a newspaper on the floor. What were the sufferings of distant, battling millions compared to the fact that he was "broke?" He was about to look away when a smaller headline caught his attention: "Great demand for Western horses for cavalry and artillery purposes."

He stooped and picked up the paper. Artillery horses bringing one hundred and seventy-five dollars a head! He figured on the margin. Whew! Then aloud: "I'll starve first!" A broad back, with a spine that looked very stiff as viewed from the rear of a high spring seat, came before his eyes. He added, "Anyhow, she'd turn me down."

That evening, side by side and hand in hand, Clifford and Ray La Fay sat at the top of the stairway where she entertained, discussing the outlook, which was as dark as the hallways of her boarding house.

"Isn't there *anybody*? Haven't you any *relatives* that you can ask?"

She knew vaguely that he was from out West, but delicacy heretofore had prevented her from seeming to pry into his past. There were things in her own life which she never discussed, one being that she had not been baptized Ray La Fay, but Augusta Glumpf; and another that her father's business failure, which she intimated had jarred Wall Street, had been merely an eviction for nonpayment of rent, and he was again doing as well as ever, repairing shoes in a hole in the wall on Eighth Avenue.

Artillery horses selling at one hundred and seventy-five a head were in Clifford's mind when he replied:

"I gotta mother that's well fixed."

"You *have*!" Ray La Fay's voice vibrated with astonishment and delight. "Won't she help you out? Why don't you make a touch?"

Clifford responded darkly:

"Would Morgan & Co. cash my check?"

"You've had a row?"

"We fell out."

"I s'pose she's proud and good looking?"

"Er—you'd notice mamma in a crowd."

"Clifford," firmly, "you'd oughta write."

"No, sir!" fiercely. "I'll die first!"

Mrs. Savage had just finished branding a colt when the hired man shoved a letter between the poles of the corral. She leaned her branding iron against a post, studied the New York postmark, then opened the letter and read:

DEAR FRENCH—I hope you will excuse this ritin and not think I'm fresh but I know you would like to hear your son is about starvin and help him out. Hes had bad luck lately and had to soke his overcoat in March, You had ogt to come on and see him for I know you would be awful proud as Cliff is a swell dresser when he has the doe and he never gets drunk or uses bad words. He told me him and you had a little trouble but he talks awful good about you. I thought you ogt to know how he is fixed work in his line being scarce and might send him a little money to help out. I hope you won't think I'm fresh because I rote. Yure friend,
MISS RA LA FAY.

Mrs. Savage thrust the letter into the capacious pocket of her denim skirt, along with a handful of horseshoe nails. There was nothing in her expression that could be construed as a fond mother's anxiety over an only son.

The next colt she roped she threw so hard it bounced.

The week following, an infinitesimal germ accomplished what it had not been believed a club with nails in it could do. Mrs. Savage was laid so low with typhoid that she called her attorney and willed five hundred dollars to Clifford and the remainder to the S. P. C. A.

While she lay with her hands idle on the cheap quilt that covered her bed, she had time to wonder what, precisely,

might be the nature of the work that Clifford was finding so scarce. Was he dressmaking now or still trimming hats?

One day, when the doctor called professionally, he found the convalescent digging post holes for a new fence.

"I thought I might as well be doin' something, doc, while I'm gettin' my strength back."

"First thing you know, you'll have a relapse. You should rest."

"I'm goin' to take a little *pasear* as soon as these posts are set."

In the meantime, Ray La Fay had abandoned hope of an answer to her letter, and the day when she could stop boning collars and move with Clifford into their own flat seemed as far off as the time when her hair would be gray and she would not care to dance.

He had an occasional evening's work as substitute, or a week's engagement giving exhibitions of ballroom steps with a partner at some tawdry cabaret, but the remuneration was not sufficient to warrant the belief that he would live long enough to catch up with what he owed.

Affairs with the catsup-and-pickle salesman, whom she had kept dangling as a last resort, were coming rapidly to a focus, as she could see. She knew it was the crisis when she found him waiting in the doorway one Saturday afternoon as she came down from work. There was purpose in his round, well-fed face.

"Well," abruptly, "is it the tango lizard or me?"

"Don't you speak so!" she flashed. "He's a good friend of mine."

"Yeh, I noticed that. But what I want to know is where I'm at, and I want to know quick. I told you before I can give you a good four-room flat, better clothes than you ever wore in your life, and I'll treat you good. Can he beat that?"

Ray La Fay knew that he could not, and her heart felt like a piece of slag under her chiffon blouse as she stood with her foot on the lower step of her boarding house.

"It's your last chance. You've been playing me like a fish for six months, and I got some spunk."

"I'll let you know next week. Good-bye, Frank."

A taxicab in front was a rare sight, but she was too miserable to wonder much as to what brought it there. One of the boarders dead, or drunk, or both, she thought indifferently as she fumbled with her latchkey at the door.

She was half sick with the thought of the decision she must make. Renouncing clothes and decent food and an honest-to-goodness home for love alone was all very well on the screen, but in New York— Husbands making forty a week did not grow on every bush!

Yet a rush of tears made it necessary for her to feel around with her foot for the lower step. It would break Cliff all up. She hated to throw him over when he was down on his luck.

"Am I speakin' to Miss Ray La Fay?"

The booming voice came from the semi-dusk of the parlor where the landlady slept at night.

Born in New York, the flapper was accustomed to unusual types, but she never had seen any one in the least like the huge woman in the Stetson hat who got up from the plush sofa and walked toward her.

"Why—yes."

"I b'lieve you wrote to me."

Surely not— It couldn't be— But who else?

"You—you are——"

"Savage is my name. Come here and tell me about Clifford." She sat down and planted a hand on either knee. "What's he doin', anyhow?"



Born in New York, the flapper was accustomed to unusual types, but she had never seen any one in the least like the huge woman in the Stetson hat.

Some instinct warned Ray La Fay to reply evasively.

"He's goin' to work next week."

"Yeah, but what *at*?"

Ray La Fay squirmed while she groped frantically for some excuse to delay the truth. If only this woman could see Cliff dance.

"I'll tell you what. We'll go Monday night to the place where he's goin' to work and surprise him."

"Well," grimly, "I ain't so curious but what I can wait if you want it

that way. Come to the Waldorf Hotel Monday night, and we'll take a hack around to that job of his. Come early, because I go to bed as soon as it's dark under the table. Shall I put on old clothes or go jest as I am?"

Ray La Fay managed to say:

"It's a dress-up place."

The flapper had a feeling that she was going into her first faint when Mrs. Savage appeared on Monday night.

"You'd notice mamma in a crowd,"

Clifford had said. Notice her! She would draw one. More than ever she looked like a longshoreman in petticoats. She was wearing a vivid yellow sport sweater of fiber silk, while a pair of white gaiters called attention to the size of her ankles and feet.

"I shore had a job findin' somethin' I could git in," Mrs. Savage observed. Noting that the flapper's staring eyes were riveted upon her clothes: "I hadn't thought of dressin' up, but after I'd been to the horse bazaar and had an argument with a feller on a coal wagon that wasn't keepin' his team shod up and then expectin' 'em to pull, I had to kill time somehow, so I took in the stores."

The flapper never had heard of trials by fire, but she had all the sensations as she walked down Peacock Alley to the taxicab waiting outside.

She gathered courage on the short ride by telling herself that it was for Clifford. She must be game. She should worry. There wouldn't be anybody there she knew, anyhow. So her carmine lips shut in a determined line as she led the way into the clatter and glare and smoke of a well-patronized cabaret restaurant.

Her heart seemed to miss not one, but several beats when the first person her eyes fell on was Frank B. Zeist, sitting at a table adjoining the only one where there were empty seats.

She nodded and managed to say:

"Evenin', Frank! What you doin' here?"

"Same as you." His eyes had a malicious gleam. "Want to let the management know the tango lizard's got some friends."

His eyes traveled impudently from Mrs. Savage's Stetson to her white spats.

Oblivious of, or indifferent to, the attention she was attracting, Mrs. Savage stared about. So this was where Clifford *worked*? He was not waiting

table; he was not in the band; maybe he was cached somewhere keeping books. Well, she wouldn't ask, and in the meantime, they might as well do what everybody else was doing—eat.

"If you can trip up one of them waiters and stop him, we'll git a T-bone steak. I'll be hungry before I turn in. I et at five o'clock."

They were in the middle of it when the brass crashed and the flapper looked up.

"I'm not sure," nervously, "but I think that'll be Cliff."

Wonderingly Mrs. Savage propped her knife and fork against her plate. Then her face lighted with a shade of hope. He must be somebody if they greeted him with a band.

It was Clifford right enough—the descendant of the Quantrell raider, with his pompadour brushed back, a touch of make-up on his face, his feet in slender, shiny pumps, arrayed in the evening clothes he had retained at sacrifices known only to himself, clasping a very décolleté partner tightly to his breast. He was half across the floor when the full truth dawned on Mrs. Savage, staring open-mouthed.

So that was how he *worked*! He danced! He earned his living not with his head, but with his feet! It was the supreme disgrace—worse a thousand times than trimming hats. The red of shame crept above the collar of her yellow sweater and spread burning over her weather-beaten face, while deep and unmistakable disgust shone in her eyes.

Watching her, it required all the flapper's courage to declare:

"Cliff is one of the best in his line in New York. He does every single step that's out and some he makes up himself."

She shivered at the ferocity of the voice that replied:

"If I had me a trace strap handy, I'd learn him some he's never danced

before! Say," to the startled waiter, "git me somethin', man's size, and make it stout!"

It had been a big mistake, their coming. Too late the flapper realized it, as she sat with fingers tightly interlaced and her eyes upon her plate. But who would have dreamed that anybody could be so prejudiced? It was all off, anybody could see that, and she felt as if she hated Frank B. Zeist. When she finally looked, there was a little smudge of black on her lower lids where her eyelashes had run off.

As Clifford's final gyrations brought him close, an unmistakable hiss made his nerves jump. Instinctively his eyes sought the direction from which it had come and fell upon his rival's derisive face. But the hiss and the applause that followed his exit were one to him, for his glance had included not only Ray La Fay, but a weird and strangely familiar figure in a Stetson hat.

He was not mistaken; the gooseflesh came out at the recollection of her forbidding face. But why had she come? It was Ray's doings. He remembered her persistency in worming from him the name of his home town. But what persuasion had she used? The fact that he was broke was not an argument that would have any weight with his mother. He was perfectly sure of that. He would know soon enough, he told himself uneasily, as he made his way among the tables, for more than likely she would lay him out so every one could hear. And that pickle drummer sitting there! Could anything be worse?

He tried to inject a cordial gayety into his voice as he extended a hand.

"Well, well! What are you doing here?"

She looked him up and down and ignored the hand.

"I've been wonderin' that myself. The only way I can figger it out is I've done somethin' I got to be pun-

ished for." With withering contempt, "All I have to say is, you're in big business!"

"I gotta live," he defended.

"Why?"

The pickle salesman cackled.

"You're a sight!"

Clifford flushed, but did not make the quite obvious reply that so was she. Instead, he found himself a chair and joined them.

Frank B. Zeist prepared to enjoy himself. Sprawling until he appeared to be sitting in the middle of his back, he stared at Mrs. Savage impudently through a cloud of smoke and kept up a running fire of comments upon her appearance, plainly intended for Clifford's ears, while his male companion snickered at his stale wit.

"When did it blow in? Where did it come from? Looks like some kind of a cross between a lady hippopotamus and an armored tank. Wish I could make a deal with her for that sweater and the Buffalo Bill hat. Some hands, if you don't care what you say. Bet you could crack nuts on her face 'thout makin' a dent. Wonder who his lady friend is, anyway."

Red and white by turns, Clifford did his best to make conversation, to talk loudly enough so that his mother would not hear. Had she? He could not tell. She was regarding herself with careful scrutiny in a mirror near by—her hat, her face, the sportive sweater of yellow silk.

From this inspection of herself, she looked at the women who were watching her with unveiled amusement in their eyes. Soft and feminine in their dainty blouses and smart hats, there was not one whom she resembled in the least. Then she looked down at Ray La Fay's slim white fingers and brought her gaze slowly to her own red hands, roughened by work and alkali water.

When she raised them to his, Clifford



"A little furrderer down, Clifford. The jug'lar's a good place."

knew that she had heard. There was an expression in them he had never seen, apologetic, humble. It hurt him—that humble look.

"I seen some freaks in my day, but, believe me, outside a zoo I never seen one like that!" The voice came very distinctly in a sudden lull.

As unexpectedly as if some strong spring had been released, Clifford came to his feet and swung about.

"You cut that out! I've stood

enough! That's my *mother* you're makin' them cracks about!"

The cackling laugh barely had left his enemy's lips when Clifford landed on his chest.

The chair went over, followed by a clatter of dishes, as the catsup salesman clutched wildly at the tablecloth. The fingers of his other hand were intertwined tightly in Clifford's pompadour, but this advantage was offset by the fact that Clifford had the lobe of

his enemy's ear between his teeth. Women screamed. The flapper clung to Mrs. Savage's arm and cried:

"Make 'em stop! Don't let him hurt Cliff!"

For answer, Mrs. Savage shoved a table back.

A waiter who would have attacked Clifford from the rear had a feeling that a pair of ice tongs had clamped down on his neck, while an exultant voice admonished in his ear:

"Let him git in a couple o' cracks!" Then: "A little furdurer down, Clifford. The jug'lar's a good place."

It did not last long, but it was fast, and mostly Clifford was on top. The catsup salesman's face looked like the upper crust of a raspberry pie when the officer who separated them stood him up. A trickle of red from Clifford's lip smeared the torn bosom of his shirt, but the lust of battle was still in his eye as he struggled to free himself.

"He's lost his job and queered himself," the flapper wept.

The manager's indignant voice replied:

"Well, I guess yes! I wouldn't have had this happen in my place for a hundred dollars, to say nothing of the china that they've smashed."

The officer gave each coat collar a suggestive twist.

"Want 'em locked up?"

Mrs. Savage used both hands to settle her Stetson a little tighter on her head as she stepped out.

"What's the matter with you people, anyhow? What you makin' all this fuss about? I'll pay for the chiny that is broke, and I got a notion the house has lived down worse things than this!"

To the officer, who made a movement of impatience: "Ca'm yourself. I'm goin' to talk." Then she turned to the expectant crowd. "You folks don't have to look at me twice to see I'm off my range—that I don't belong here no more'n a Percheron in a saddle-horse race. But, grantin' that, what for a man would he be to set and hear his mother called a hippopotemus and an armored tank by a scissorbill like that?"

"Lemme tell you"—her head went a little higher and her voice rang out—"my son comes of fightin' stock. We had a little trouble, him an' me, but that's forgot. I've told you the straight of it, and if you still want to lock him up"—she addressed the manager, and her vivid blue eyes had the look that came into them when she set out to conquer a balky horse—"fly at it, and be durned to you, for I'll spend the outfit gittin' him off, so he kin lick that feller right!"



AT THE END

THE rainbow arches o'er the years,
And, at its end, Youth deems
The treasure-trove of Age is hung—
The golden coin of dreams.

The rainbow arches o'er the years,
And, o'er its beam far flung,
The dreams of Age go back to where
The gold of Youth is hung!

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH.

Ways of Women

By Lucy Stone Keller

Author of "In the Green," "Memoirs of Janet Ann," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

An out-of-the-ordinary story that will delight you with its charm and understanding of the heart of youth.

JAMES lived two doors south of Judy. When Judy had been two and James four, they had adopted each other, and they had stayed "adopted" ever since. Not that the course of their adoption had run smooth—quite the contrary; it had progressed more after the nature of a series of precipices, leveled somewhat by constant periods of "making up." Until they entered high school, these "making ups" had been necessitated chiefly by pugilistic activities on the part of Judy's fists. Judy was robust and red cheeked, as sturdy as a marigold flower. James was slight, with legs like spindles, and his code of ethics denied him the privilege of fighting girls.

He made this fact clear in a note on rough tablet paper, cherished by Judy's pretty mother. The episode occurred when they were in the fourth grade.

DEER JUDY: My muther says that laadees dont fite boys any more than boys fites girls. you aint one. I was going to put a chokolat with pink inside in yure kote poket in the hall, but now I aint. I cood lick you easy as pi if you wuznt a girl.

JAMES DYER.

But Judy went blossoming through childhood, unhampered by any such principles of decorum as constantly harassed the serious James. She preferred *not* to be a lady, if that state of refinement infringed on any such delights as swimming, baseball, fighting,

and marble games in the middle of the road, sweetened by the risk of being run over. James struggled valiantly to instill into her a proper sense of the frailty of her sex, but it was not until femininity began to offer allurements of its own that Judy took any interest whatever in being a girl.

When their school fellows began pairing off to walk home together, James and Judy experienced nothing new, for they had always come home together unless they were "mad at each other."

When other boys began hanging over the gate of their chosen lady's dwelling, ostensibly to consult about a stiff algebra problem or to delve into Cæsar's wisdom, James stalked without subtlety into Judith's house and rummaged through the pantry with her, if they had not already satisfied themselves in Mrs. Dyer's cooky box.

When "drop-the-handkerchief" and "London-bridge" parties evolved into "post-office" and "winkum" and "spin-the-plate" affairs, James perfunctorily chose Judy to kiss and, scorning the privilege of privacy in the adjoining dining room, performed his penalty in public, not in the least as an avowal of sentiment, but merely to avoid embarrassment and "being so darned silly."

It must be admitted that Judy did not always choose James, and even though he never got a satisfactory ex-

planation from her as to *why* she didn't, it bothered him very little, and he attributed it to the queeriness of girls. That the relations between him and Judy should ever be shaken by anything more violent than their own personal differences did not occur to James until the advent of Mr. Frank Everett, aged nineteen, the daring and debonaire son of the new owner of the Clean-all Fluid factory. This happened in the year that James was a senior and Judy a junior.

The newcomer was a senior, and the sensation he made in the youthful circles of Fairville was unparalleled. He undertook at once to pattern the social and athletic life of the Fairville high school after the metropolitan lines to which he was accustomed. On the fourth evening of their acquaintance, James found him lounging gracefully against Judith's gate. Judith's arms were piled high with blazing maple leaves. Her new-knight had just said:

"Gee, girlie, you're some class, believe *me*! You know, you oughta go on the stage."

So James' careless, but cordial "Hello! Been raking the yard?" sounded hideously ordinary and little-townish.

"We've been in the park, gathering these lovely, lovely leaves," said Judy crisply, staring at him with a puzzling air of superiority. *Gathering leaves!* James would as soon have thought of inviting her to catch raindrops with him in a teacup as to waste time gathering leaves. But they *did* look pretty in her arms. He surveyed her appraisingly.

"Sure pretty," he conceded, and addressed his new classmate, "I've just been up and rented the Odd Fellows' Hall for the senior dance. We'll make those juniors feel sick, all right. You dance, don't you?"

"Well, I should rather!" said Mr. Everett. "Where'd 'j think I blow from, anyhow? That's about all we do

in Chicago—fox trot and daisy twinkle and lame duck."

"*What's* the daisy twinkle?" asked Judy.

"Don't you know *that*? Oh, crocodiles! I thought *everybody* knew that! Goes like this."

He whistled a variegated melody and did marvelous things with his feet. Judith leaned over the gate and gazed, enraptured. James was no less admiring.

"Oh, *will* you teach me?" gasped Judith.

"*Will* I? Well, won't I just!"

He winked appreciatively at James, who smiled back amiably, though somewhat at a loss as to his meaning. Never had James felt of so little importance. It swept over him like a chilling blast that his straggling brown hair would never, *never* pompadour as did Everett's stiff black locks; that there were no creases in his trousers; that he was as incapable of attaining to the "daisy twinkle" as to the rigid pompadour; and, bitterest of all, that he looked spindly and narrow shouldered beside this elegant stranger.

"Well, I've gotta be blowing along," Everett was saying. "See you to-morrow evening then, Miss Judith. So long, Dyer."

Judith's one unanswerable remark on the way to the house was the first warning to James that his and Judith's was not a private world.

"Well, of all the buttinskies, James Dyer, you're the worst!" said Judith, and closed the door spiritedly in his dazed face.

The next evening found Judy and Mr. Everett again sauntering among the autumn leaves, while James sat on his own back steps and tried conscientiously to figure out what was the matter with him. Coming to the conclusion that his upset feelings were simply due to disgust at Judy's "making such a



fool of herself," he penciled the following note:

DEAR JUDITH: Now I'd just like to know what you think you have to get sore about? If you think I care because a new fellow talks to you a little, you must be crazy.

JAMES.

He dispatched this ultimatum by small Billy White, vaguely hinting at a nickel payment in the future. While he waited for Billy's return, he hung around the front gate, and so fell into conversation with Jim Sanders, who was passing. The talk fell naturally upon the new senior, and Jim remarked carelessly that Mr. Everett was "crazy about Ruth Vernon. Been out with her every single night since he's been here."

Although Everett had dwelt in Fairville but five days, this news dissolved

Judith's arms were piled high with blazing maple leaves. Her new knight had just said: "Gee, girle, you're some class, believe me! You know, you oughta go on the stage."

a great heaviness from about the regions of James' stomach.

There came no answering note from Judy, which bothered him somewhat, as Judy never neglected to keep up her share of any quarrel. He started over

to have an old-fashioned understanding in the matter, but thought better of it.

The next morning he met Everett on Main Street and they walked together, his new classmate opening the conversation by remarking casually, both hands in his trousers pockets:

"Say, you've got some classy girls in this little old burg, do you know it?"

"Oh, I don't know. I'm not much of a girl chaser, myself," said James modestly, wondering at the acute feeling of discomfort stealing over him. "Ruth Vernon always makes a hit with new fellows."

"Well, she hasn't got anything on that little skirt of yours, Dyer. Crocodiles! *She's* a little daisy. I wouldn't mind cutting you out, there."

A sudden force filled James with caution. He hated this handsome new fellow with a suddenness that was disarming; he had no time to find out *why*. He must act quickly and with new-born diplomacy.

"You can't cut *me* out with anybody," he said coolly. "I never had a girl in my life."

"Oh, no, I guess not! With the fellows all telling me I might as well try to make a hit with the moon as with Judy Kendall!"

"Oh, Judy!" said James with a scoffing shrug, but feeling as if the inside of him were frizzling up into a crisp. "Why, she's just a kid. You see, I've lived next door to her all my life, and her mother sort of expects me to look out for her."

Everett looked a trifle abashed. Young men of his sophisticated circles did not meet such issues so frankly.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" he said awkwardly. "Well, then, I won't be cutting into *your* pie if I do try for the fair Judith?"

"Not a bit of it," said James heartily. "I guess she likes you, all right. But I thought you had a case on Ruth Vernon."

"Oh, she's more my style," unctuously admitted Everett, "but she's going off to college in a week or so, and anyhow she's too darned wise. Why, I'll bet she's spooned with every fellow in this town. She had her head on my shoulder before I'd known her twenty minutes."

"Well, Judy Kendall's not that sort," snapped James' tongue before he had time to guide it to a more strategic utterance.

"Sure not. That's why I'm keen on her. Of course they all fall for it finally, but *I* sort of like to get in at the beginning of the show."

James found no reply. He did not wholly grasp the flow of his companion's language, and he was too much of an amateur in such matters to put forth any personal opinions. The fellows had seldom talked "girl" to James, since they had accepted Judy as a matter of course, and he had never paid any attention to any one else. Now he regretted his ignorance, and he hated this monster at his side so fiercely that it was all he could do to feign indifference. So he clumsily, but insistently switched the conversation to football.

There was nothing that Everett was not capable of showing them about football. He had been captain of every team he had ever belonged to, and he had played—victoriously always—all over the country.

"You're not husky enough to make the team, are you?" he asked James pleasantly. This was indeed a poisoned arrow, and he continued to twist it into James' sensitiveness! "Why don't you take exercises, old man? I know some that'll give you a peach of a mus. Feel o' that."

James obediently felt of the young giant's beautiful muscle, wishing fervently that he could secretly kill and bury him.

"Gee, you're nothing but a feather!"

went on Everett sympathetically. "Been sick much?"

"No," said James, unable to continue his suffering. "I've got to stop in here on some business for dad. So long."

That day James developed a feeling of strangeness to the whole world. His companions seemed unfamiliar, the teachers utter foreigners; even his mother changed into a misunderstanding, unsympathetic alien. Judy was the greatest stranger of all; it didn't seem as if he had ever known her before. He did not eat supper, and the strange woman who was his mother insisted that he take some brown medicine, which he abominated. In the evening his father went to lodge, and gradually he regained a feeling of relationship with his mother, so much so, in fact, that when they went out to rake up the leaves in the yard, he said abruptly:

"Say, mother, you know that new chap that's come to town. Well, he's crazy about Judy, and he's one of the kind that thinks it's cute to talk about girls—you know."

"I just thought he was," said Mrs. Dyer seriously.

A smothering wave of something warm and grateful surged into James' throat at the quiet, comprehending words.

"Yes," said James, losing all sense of hesitancy, "he bragged to me this morning about spooning with Ruth Vernon—said he could spoon with any girl he wanted to. What d' you think I better do about Judy? I'm pretty sure her mother don't tell her things the way she ought to."

Mrs. Dyer demolished a neat pile of leaves with an undirected rake, while she turned her head to sniff the autumn fragrance on the breeze and perhaps to conquer a struggling smile before she turned a serious face to her solemn young son.

"Oh, I think Mrs. Kendall tells Judy things," James. It may be, you know,

that Judy doesn't always listen. Have you talked to her at all about the new boy?"

"Nope. She's sore at me because I went over when Everett was talking to her."

"Oh," said his mother, and reflected. "You see, James dear, Judy is growing up, and we'll have to get used to a very different kind of girl from now on. I imagine you think just about as much of Judy as if she were your own sister."

Oh, fathomless subtlety of mothers!

"Pretty near, I guess," admitted James. "And she's too much of a kid to go chasing around with strangers. *She don't know a thing.*"

His mother stared at his earnest young face, and her own was very tender, though touched with a whimsical humor.

"How do you *know* she doesn't, James?" she asked teasingly, but any intimation was wholly lost on James.

"Why, because she's never been around with any feller in her life."

Mrs. Dyer reached out and put a hand on his shoulder.

"You blessed young thing!" she said softly. "Now listen to your wise old mother. It's going to be a little hard on you, James, to stand off and watch Judy learn her own lessons, but you've got to do it, just as every boy sees his sisters. I remember how your Uncle Bob kept our whole family in a frenzy over my youthful fancies. Now if I were you, I wouldn't let Judy know I felt the least worried"—she chose this word cautiously—"about her. Treat her exactly as if nothing unusual were happening."

"Oh, sure! But don't you think I ought to let her know the kind of things he says about girls, so she'll— Oh, you know—so she'll be careful?"

"N-o, I don't think so. I hardly think that'd be quite playing the game, James—not quite."

"Well, I didn't think so myself," said



"Speed up there, Grandma Dyer!" he portioned out to James, whose sore joints threatened to come apart. "Have you got the rheumatics?"

James, a little shamefacedly, vigorously attacking a pile of leaves and ending the discussion by a supremely indifferent, "Well, she'll have to take care of herself, I guess. *I* should worry."

That night, James' mirror witnessed strange rites at bedtime. Instead of the usual remarkably brief preparations for retiring, James disrobed and deliberately surveyed his slight, somewhat bony figure from every possible angle, his eyes miserable with the tragedy of it. Then he half-heartedly began a weird series of exercises such as he thought might develop football muscle, but which tended more directly toward putting all of his joints out of place. Having worked himself into a woeful collection of aches, he rubbed himself lavishly with olive oil smuggled from the pantry and fashioned a sleeping garment from an old shirt, safety pins, and two turkish towels, in order not to get his pajamas greasy and thus betray his secret. For not even to his mother was James able to confide his newly-acute misery over being a "skinny." The boys had organized a

football squad that noon and had chosen Frank Everett as captain, by popular acclaim.

In the morning, James waited for Judy and determinedly accosted her as she passed. Icicles could not be colder or more pointed than Judy's crisp "Hello!" and accompanying glance of disfavor. But James swung into step with her, noticing, as he stepped behind her to the "correct" outer edge of the walk, that the enormous black bow of ribbon usually bobbing on the knot of her yellow hair was gone. Soft little curls, once hidden, now played prettily at the base of a perfect "figure eight."

"Forgot your hair ribbon, didn't you?"

"I *did* not," returned Judy pertly.

James examined her new profile critically, struggling with a wild desire to slap the maddening owner of it, and managed to remark in his pleasantest manner:

"Hair looks good that way, Judy."

"Thanks."

"Oh, don't mention it. Say, you're

going to practice basket ball to-night, aren't you?"

"I am not," said Judy, with the same nasty inflection.

"Well, gee whiz! You're a great captain of a team! Two times now you've skipped practice this week. The Summerton girls'll beat you all hollow."

"Well, one thing, James Dyer—I bet you the Summerton boys don't beat us at football *this* year."

James grew tingling and hot. Last year *he* had been captain, and their playing had not been brilliant. He made a supreme effort at calmness.

"Sure they won't. We sure needed Everett on the team."

"Sweet of you to say so, seeing as you probably won't even make the team."

James hunched his sore shoulders, with their promise of coming muscle, and marveled at his almost unhuman serenity.

"Oh, maybe I'll manage to make quarterback. I'm not such a runt as I look."

Judy's scathing glance was eloquent, and James, feeling more diminutive at every step, walked in humiliated silence until they reached the corner by Jenk's hardware store, where Judy abruptly halted.

"I'm going to wait for a friend here. Perhaps *he'll* be gentleman enough to carry my books."

This new method of warfare was beyond James; it must be the "growing up" change that his mother had prophesied. He departed sullenly, with an exaggerated flourish of his gray cap.

At noon, the boys practiced football before a hilarious audience of girls and smaller boys. Everett was spectacular to a degree and full of loud-yelled comment about the players.

"Speed up there, Grandma Dyer!" he portioned out to James, whose sore joints threatened to come apart. "Have you got the rheumatics?"

In the laughter that followed from the lines James heard Judy's high-pitched giggle and heard nothing *but* it during the long afternoon session. Quite in harmony with the rest of the day's discords, an anonymous note reached his desk in general assembly, containing the brief comment:

I think you ought to know that Judy Kendall isn't the kind of girl you think she is. This was found under her desk.

A TRUE FRIEND.

The inclosed "this" was written in Judy's familiar scrawl:

Judy Kendall friendship - marriage
Frank Everett friendship - marriage

Here were more confounding complications. James buried himself outwardly in ancient history, but inwardly he was heartily miserable with fresh embarrassment. He had no doubt but that the note came from Edith Masters, whose coquettish glances of late had been filling him with hideous bashfulness. Judy's smiles, alone of all the girls he knew, did not strike terror to his heart, and her incomprehensible enmity was as nothing compared to the perplexities of Edith Masters' "true friendship."

He decided that he must be ill and ought to get out into the fresh air, and so got excused ten minutes before dismissal. The streets seemed strange and unfriendly, without their crowds of boys and girls. He wished he had waited and come home with the others. The house was empty, and the old cat hissed at him from the porch. Truly the world was becoming gruesome in its actions toward him. He sat down on the top step, grimly awaiting the passing of Judy and almost offering up a prayer that she might come by alone. She did.

"Hi, Judy! Come here a minute," he called.

"Well, what do you think I am? If you want to see me, come here."

More of this incredible growing up!

He walked to the gate, bareheaded and stern faced. It was a queer thing that he had never noticed before how pretty Judy was. Her eyes were like blue flowers, and her hair, loosened from its new coiffure, fluffed about her face like yellow cobwebs. Her manner was not so attractive.

"Well, what do you want?" she demanded.

Wordless, he handed her the incriminating slip. She surveyed it calmly, flushing a little, but undoubtedly rather pleased!

"Well, what about it?"

"I s'pose you *like* to have everybody making fun of you for being so darn silly."

"Oh, pooh! As if every girl doesn't cancel names just to see how they come out! And I can just tell you, James Dyer, if you don't quit bothering me, I'll ask Frank to *make* you stop it."

She flung this bomb over her departure shoulder so swiftly that the deliberate-minded James could not formulate any fitting retort.

"Ye gods!" he muttered in desperation. "Ye gods!"

That night, Everett walked with Judy in the moonlight. James, suffering physically from long exercising and mentally from the wiles of woman, watched them from his bedroom window. They passed three times, Judy clinging to her escort's arm in an unbelievable manner. Her laughter was as sweet as a bird call on the autumn air, but it sent shivers of misery down James' spine. When they had passed out of sight and were lost in the darkness of Judy's porch, James flung himself on the bed and relinquished all claims of brotherhood toward Judy.

"I hate her—I hate her—I hate her!" he mumbled into the depths of his pillow, his tears burning his cheeks and

settling into warm little pools under his neck. For before him, clearer than reality, was a picture of Judy sitting in the Kendall hammock close to the heir of the Clean-all Fluid factory *with her head on his shoulder*.

Tortured by this, he finally fell into a troubled sleep.

But the new day, with its sunshine, routed the night's tragedies and helped him to gird on an armor of indifference. He looked in his mirror at the freckled face with its noble forehead and splendid eyes, but saw only the freckles and the *not* noble nose. A comforting thought of Abraham Lincoln came to him. *He* had been a homely man, also of many sorrows, and how he was revered by the nation! It should be so with him. He went down to breakfast whistling, courageously starting on the path to greatness. It was marvelous what a little will power could do for a fellow. On the way to school, Jim Sanders remarked cautiously that Everett seemed to be getting an awful case on Judy, and James proudly heard himself replying:

"Yes, thank the Lord! Now I won't have to have her tagging me around everywhere."

But at noon matters passed beyond his control. The masculine element of the Fairville high school always lunched on the east side of the building when the weather permitted, the feminine element on the west. On this day, James and Jim Sanders were sitting rather apart, discussing the financial problems of the senior dance, when Everett sauntered over.

"Pay me that quarter, Sanders," he demanded jovially.

"Ah, you never did," enigmatically replied Sanders.

"Well, you just better believe I did!"

"Ah, go on!" parried Jim uneasily, glancing at James with a peculiar grin.

Something about this conversation clutched James' throat and refused to

let him swallow his hearty mouthful of sandwich.

"What's the row?" he mumbled at Jim.

But it was Everett who explained:

"He bet me I couldn't kiss Judy Kendall the first time I had a date with her. That was a good line of kidding you gave me all right. Why, she's——"

James' will power and ideas of future greatness deserted him simultaneously. He got to his feet and spat out the sandwich and pickle that would not be swallowed.

"You're a—dirty liar!" he informed the surprised Everett, who bristled instantly and took two menacing steps toward his accuser.

Their audience closed in about them as quickly and quietly as watchful wolves.

"Ah, James, we was just a-foolin'," began Jim Sanders.

"Nobody can call me a liar—and live!" declared Everett, looking regally about him.

"You *are* a dirty liar," repeated James, almost in a whisper.

His knees trembled and his freckles stuck out like mud spots. Everett grinned at this display of fright, and said condescendingly:

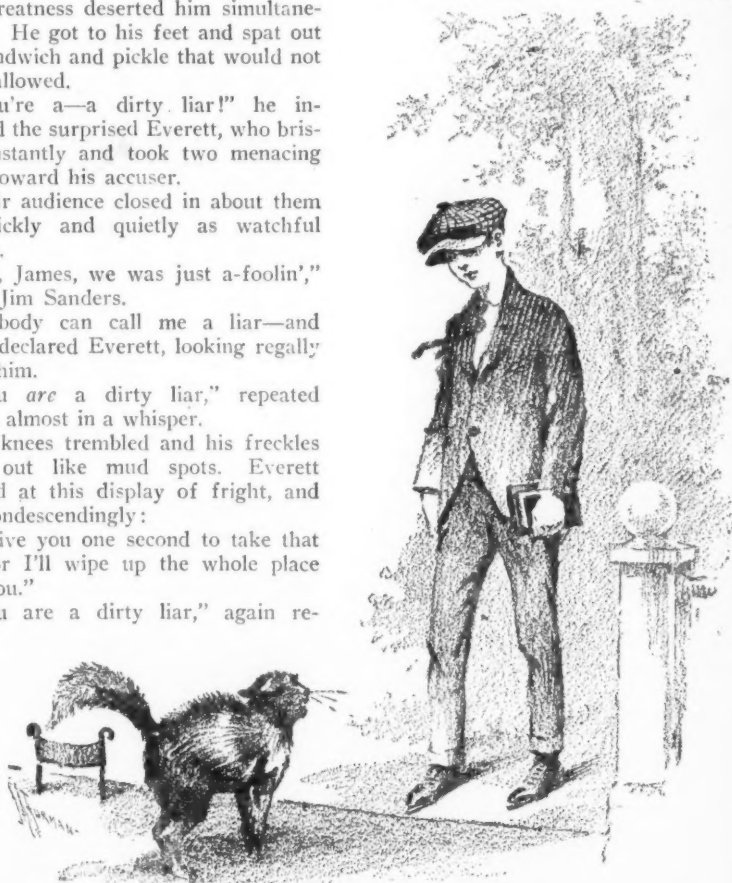
"I give you one second to take that back or I'll wipe up the whole place with you."

"You are a dirty liar," again re-

peated James, with as little vitality as a run-down phonograph record.

Whereupon, the fight began. It seemed to James as if all the armies of Europe had descended upon him. The new boy hit him every time he struck—and he struck hard; whereas James expended the major portion of his efforts in the air.

To his everlasting shame, he wept,



The house was empty, and the old cat hissed at him from the porch. Truly the world was becoming gruesome in its actions toward him.

though after the first instant's shock, he felt no pain. He had known that he was no fighter, but the bitter, sickening realization of it was far too intense to admit any mere physical pain into his sufferings. He was making a fool—a *spectacle* of himself in front of the fellows. And Judy— But with the thought of Judy's scorn and hateful giggle, his mind deserted him, and he welcomed the queer, detached feeling settling over him, thinking it was death. His cheek had been cut open by Everett's ring, his thumb was out of place, his nose was bleeding profusely, and he was altogether a most distressing object, when at last a kindly blow sent him tumbling unconscious into Sanders' arms.

The next thing that he comprehended clearly was his mother's voice saying briskly:

"Well, Jimmie boy, feeling better?"

Her eyes were a little red and swollen, but she was smiling and cheery. She had always struggled valorously to keep James from knowing that she worried because he was not so strong a boy as she would have him.

James stretched out his stiff limbs and explored the universe of hot-water bottles around him—and remembered!

"I'm about as much good as a sick cat!" he muttered bitterly, and turned his bundled head toward the wall. "Who brought me home?"

"Mr. Evans, in his car. He said to tell you it wasn't every boy that had nerve enough to fight a boy with twice his strength."

"Hunh?" James turned partially over, and his mother matter-of-factly repeated the principal's opinion, while she tucked in the covers and fussed with his pillows. "I'm just some proud of you, my son," she finished.

After a tender snuggle of her face against his, she left, and her freshly, but less despairingly bewildered son went to sleep.

After a short, restless nap, he turned over and stared sleepily into the wide blue eyes of Judy, who sat, stiff and straight, in his mother's little rocker by the bed. James' breathing apparatus suddenly ceased to work.

"Hello!" said Judy, superlatively careless. "Do—do you feel all right now?"

"Oh, *great!*" said James, managing to catch a jerky breath and pulling the covers tight under his chin, the exposed parts of his face redder than the collar on Judy's middy blouse. Judy swallowed gulpily.

"I'm just too—too sorry for—for *anything*, James."

This was the most horrible humiliation of all—to be a chicken-livered runt that people had to feel sorry for! His eyes began to sting, and he offered up a fervent, frenzied prayer that the Lord would help him control his tears. His supplication brought direct results, for Mrs. Dyer, who was making room on the dresser for a tea tray, came over to the bed and relieved him of the necessity for speech.

"Don't need to feel sorry a bit, Judy," she said lightly. "Nothing better for a boy than a good fight occasionally. Now sit up here, James, and eat something."

Even through his mental confusion, it occurred to James that his mother was a rare and wonderful treasure. He even forgot Judy's presence for the instant, lost pleasantly in his mother's comradely smile. But Judy was not one long to be forgotten.

"I just think you were perfectly *splendid* to—to be brave enough to fight that horrid, great, big brute!"

"*That horrid, great, big brute!*" The words whisked around in James' head like gnats, buzzing bewilderingly.

"Yes, I'm afraid the new boy isn't much of a gentleman," his mother was saying to Judy.

"Oh, he's *not*, Mrs. Dyer! He's

nothing but a—a—an old *prize fighter*," declared Judy in all solemnity.

"And a dirty liar," James felt induced to add, as he crawled awkwardly into a sitting posture.

But Judy's face shamed like a wilting flower. Her cheeks flamed furiously and as quickly lost their color.

"He—he told everybody he was, after they took you home, but—but he *did* kiss me," she stated miserably, her inky fingers twisting her handkerchief into a little string.

James stared at her bowed head with his one unbandaged eye and into its brown depths crept unfathomable wonder. Mrs. Dyer, coughing, fled to the dresser to get the tray.

"You—you see everybody—all the girls I go with—have been telling me about *kissing* and—and everything. They call it 'spooning.' And I—I just thought I'd see if it *was* such a wonderful thing. So—so I just kind of—of *experimented* on him, and it was too silly for anything! And—and I just *abominate* him, honestly I do, Mrs. Dyer!"

Even James' exceedingly painful grin of embarrassment vanished at this supreme declaration. For Judy's uplifted face was touched with the rare beauty of unshamed truth, as free from any ugliness of knowledge as a fresh-blown blossom. Though Mrs. Dyer's lips struggled a moment with amusement, there was in her eyes immeasurable tenderness and something—very near to reverence at the light of unstained youth in Judy's face.

"Of course, honey, those things *are* silly," she said gently, "and every girl has to find out that they are. Now you—you—suppose you hold this tray a minute while I run out to the kitchen and heat this milk again."

Judy sat on the edge of the bed, balancing the tray on James' none too steady knees. James gazed at the egg cup, his mind absolutely devoid of all

sensations. Finally the thought, "He *licked* me—and he sat in the hammock with her and *kissed* her!" blazed across his consciousness.

"Oh, Judy," he blurted out, "what made you let him k—kiss you?"

"I don't know," said this strangely humble Judy.

He slowly raised his head and looked at her, while over them settled the blissful serenity of an old-fashioned "making up," though there was in it an elusive sense of something new and unknown in the realms of childhood.

"Oh, Judy, you—you *are* my girl, aren't you?" he whispered in an agony of awkwardness. "Even if I am—a homely runt?"

Judy leaned over him, her cheeks like pink peonies, her eyes bluer than skies of springtime.

"Of course I'm your girl," she whispered, "you old simpleton! There! There! There!"

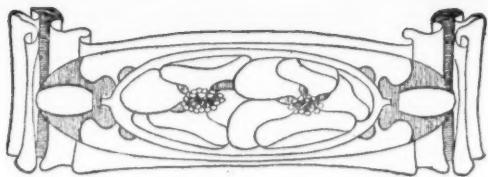
And her warm red lips found the three unbandaged spots of his face—one eye, the tip of his freckled nose, and a corner of his mouth. Before he could breathe or open his one good eye, she had fled.

But behind her she had left an eternal memory, sweeter than roses, than victory, than anything else that James would ever know in his life. After he had had his supper, he stretched his bruised body out in the cool bed and soared with his soul into the future—a future concerned with a man as homely and as great as Abraham Lincoln, and concerned, also, with Judy's sweet, warm lips.

When he awoke at dusk, his mother was sitting rocking beside his bed. He greeted her with a wan grin and the first observation of his manhood.

"Women are sure queer, aren't they, mother?"

"Well, yes, dear, I think perhaps we *are* a little queer," said his mother humbly.



Does Recreation Recreate?

By Hildegarde Lavender

Author of "On the Economy of Spending Money," "Abandoning the Home," etc.

THE two sisters had not met for a few years, one of them living in New York and one of them in Galesburg or Bloomington or some other city of the Middle West. Not unnaturally, as soon as they had satisfied their sisterly curiosity in regard to each other's health, each other's husbands, children, butchers' bills, attitude toward boarding schools, servant problems, and other such vital matters, they began to take stock of each other's opportunities for recreation. With them, as with almost all the other people in the world, the advantages and disadvantages of their lives were summed up in the opportunities they enjoyed for recreation.

Have you, by the way, ever thought about that? After a few elementary wants are supplied, isn't the chief difference between man and man, class and class, in the opportunity for recreation? Cræsus can eat—with safety, at any rate—only so many calories a day; and his chief clerk, and, probably, his office boy consume the same number, and in all likelihood with equal appetite. They are as well, if not as luxuriously, protected against the cold as he is; their roofs are as watertight, their overcoats as warm. If their pillows lack anything of the softness of his, they don't know it after they are asleep.

The main point of difference between Cræsus and his hirelings is in the sort of diversion he can take if he wants to. He can go to Florida and play golf or fish for tarpon. He can go—or he could go in happier times than these—to Monte Carlo and gamble; or to the Rocky Mountains and shoot; or to Norway to look at the midnight sun; or to seven or eight musical comedies a week. He can, if he possesses a sporting mind, sail the seas in his own yacht, daring the drifting mine or the near-sighted and short-tempered submarine to do their worst. Or he can play polo. Or he can endow museums in his native town and have a beautiful time browbeating the architect. All of these forms of recreation are denied to the clerk and the office boy, though Cræsus can eat no more, drink no more, sleep no more, wear no more, than they do.

This by way of parenthesis. The two sisters, who are the pegs upon which these reflections on the art of recreation hang, met as has been said, and, having rapidly exhausted the fundamental topics, proceeded to compare notes on recreation.

"We went to the opera last night," mentions Madame Manhattan. "We must go a lot while you are here, dear. You must miss music awfully out there

in—"Peoria or Dayton or wherever it was.

"Oh, no!" cries Madame Middle West, vivaciously repudiating the slur. "It's a wonderfully musical place! We have a chorus of five hundred—the St. Cecilia. I don't belong, because, as you know, I have no voice. But Fred does, and that keeps me in touch. There's an oratorio society and a Heights orchestra. And I have kept up my piano practice religiously. What did you hear last night?"

"Farrar, in 'Butterfly,'" The New York sister smiles with conscious, indulgent humor upon the one from Galesburg. Then she adds, with amiable malice: "I don't suppose you often have her out in your fortunate city?"

"No, but our singing society, in conjunction with our city orchestra, gave 'Butterfly' for the benefit of the Belgian Relief Fund last month." Middle West tries to be casual about it, but she cannot quite keep a note of civic pride out of her voice.

"Very nice, I'm sure," says New York patronizingly. "Of course all sorts of groups here, too, get up things in which they may show themselves off, and have a good time, for the benefit of the foreign relief work and of home charities. But we were talking of art."

"I thought we were talking of recreation," says Middle West.

And the perennial discussion is on.

What is recreation? Is it art? Is it sublimated horse play? Is it hospitality or is it society? Is it something done or is it something applied? What is its truly symbolic figure—the "fan" upon the baseball bleachers, yelling himself hoarse over the home run some other man is making down there on the diamond, or the small boy organizing a nine in the corner lot? How shall we typify it? In the fringe of beautifully dressed ladies and gentlemen bordering the polo grounds, where the visiting Englishmen and the home team are

wheeling their ponies around in pursuit of a driven ball, or in the little girl mounted upon old Dobbin at the farm and delightedly prodding that patient beast with her active heels? Is it exemplified in the glittering horseshoe of boxes at the Metropolitan Opera House, declaring that Caruso is not in good voice to-night, or the group gathered about the piano in the shabby parlor, singing "Clementine" and "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean?" Is the symbolic figure for recreation done in action or in observation?

The dictionary, that first help in time of definitive trouble and that court of last resort in argument, affords but little aid. It defines in terms of derivation, to be sure, and recalls that recreation may mean re-creation. But then it goes on to suggest synonyms—"entertainment," "sport," "diversion," and the like, and the debaters are no nearer the truth than they were in the beginning. There still remains the fundamental question—is recreation something you achieve for yourself or something that others do for you? Is it an effort of your own mind or muscles, or is it a sauce poured over you as if you were a pudding?

Perhaps, by going back to the nursery, a little light may be let in upon the obscure question. What children are the happiest in their play? What children gain the most from their sports? Are they those whose doting parents and fond, foolish aunts buy them every new toy that is put upon the market; those who have "real" trains of cars and automobiles that actually go under power? Or are they those whose imagination are kept actively at work to construct the world in which they play? Which little girl gets the more enjoyment from her dolls: Patricia, who has eighteen, each with its own bed or cradle and its own wardrobe, dolls that open and shut their eyes and have really quite extensive

vocabularies and come in two sexes and many professions—sailors, soldiers, Red Cross nurses, old black mammies, Indian squaws, and so on and so on—or little Miss Avenue A, who has just one doll, constructed out of a pair of old stockings, some string, some buttons, and an active fancy?

There is no question in the mind of the psychologist or child specialist which one gains the more pleasure and the more education from her play. It is always the one who is obliged to use imagination, mother wit, ingenuity; never the one for whom the imagination, wit, and ingenuity of the rest of the world have done all there is to be done, and for whom all that remains is an apathetic acceptance.

Only effort creates, and only effort re-creates. A flabby muscle cannot be made taut and powerful again except by effort—either one's personal effort or a proxy's, either by gymnastic work or massage. The former is the speedier in effect and altogether better; and the latter is recommended only for people who have grown too weak or too weak-willed to exert themselves, and even for them it is allowed only until they are in condition to exercise themselves again.

There seems to be a fair analogy between the re-creation of one's physical strength and recreation in general. That is why, for purely recreational purposes, the amateur drama society, the small singing club, the neighborhood tennis courts, the family checkerboard, even, are all more valuable than a season ticket at the Empire Theater or the Washington Square Players or the Metropolitan Opera House, or admission to the grand stand when McLoughlin is winning the All-America championship.

"Heaven help us!" cry those who, like the New York sister, have a high regard for art. "Are we to be delivered over to amateurs, then? Does skill, does perfection of technique,

count for nothing at all? Shall we all take to performing very badly in dramas of our own composition—for in the writing of plays, as well as in their production, the advocate of active recreation will probably insist upon original effort—instead of delighting our ears with Bernhardt's diction, our eyes with Belasco's stagings, our intellects with Bernard Shaw's witticisms? Shall we decline the box that our rich friend sends us for the opera, in order that we may stay at home and hang over the family piano—which needs tuning—singing 'Alice, Where Art Thou?' or 'Upidee?' Shall we say to Paderewski, when he comes to our town: 'No, no, good sir! I play my own Chopin—or, if not Chopin, the compositions of the gifted young man in the next block?' Shall art shut up shop, so to speak, because communal artistic recreation has become a fad in so many centers?"

The answer, of course, is that it doesn't work out that way. The artistic performance of a play is far more likely to interest a group of people who have struggled together over "putting on" something for the benefit of the church or the Serbians, or for mere sport, than the great, semi-somnolent crowd who attend the theaters for the purpose of being recreated without personal effort. There is no opposition between the neighborhood pageant, the school dramatic society's entertainment, and the theater considered as a vehicle of art. There are no more regular and intelligent attendants at the concerts in any city than the music students of that city. There are no more faithful visitors to art exhibitions than art students. It was the amateur skaters who flocked to see "Charlotte," and aspiring swimmers are the most enthusiastic of Annette Kellermann's audiences. The presence in any community of large groups of persons who use an art expression as a means of recreation, in-

stead of militating against the success of art as art, stimulates it. After the communal masque in New York, during the Shakespeare tercentenary, in which so many unprofessional groups took part, there was undoubtedly a livelier interest in poetry, in pageantry, in art dancing, in music, and in Shakespeare, than there had ever been before. The reason was simple—it was because a few hundred people out of New York's millions had enjoyed for once the stimulating and recreating experience of "doing" the arts instead of merely having them done for them. If such recreative group activities could be enormously multiplied, it is not too much to hope that there might result a latter-day renaissance in all the arts.

If we study the subject of recreation, we shall probably find a clew to the rather widely prevalent and deeply rooted masculine objection to the thing known as "society." Society probably grew up out of a desire for recreation—was designed to furnish a recreative activity after the day's work was over and to satisfy the perpetual child that exists in all of us in its instinct for play. But, unfortunately for the success of the plan, the first spiritual need of the race is not for play, but for something that may be dignified by the name of work. And the sex to which the formation of "society" was committed, having, in that group which could afford "society," no occupation sufficiently exacting to weary it or to fulfill its ambitions and energies, made social existence an occupation, a profession, a labor. It became gradually an absorbing business. It came to require expenditures of time, of talent, of money, out of all proportion to the returns. Or, at any rate, the returns seemed inadequate to the business men who were asked to take this "society" as their chief recreation. There was nothing in particular for them to do in it. They couldn't dress—the standardization of

men's clothes being established; they couldn't cook, decorate, find novel entertainers. They could eat the dinners which the inventiveness of their hostesses or the skill of their hostesses' chefs set before them; they could drink their hosts' wines and smoke their cigars. They could sometimes play cards, if that choice were offered them after dinner, for sometimes they were accomplished in other forms of gambling and competition besides those of their business. But there was no recreation in it all. If the aspiring lady who gave an entertainment provided professional entertainers, these were seldom so good as could be seen upon the stage. If she didn't, there was very little to be done except to pay a few heavy compliments and to try to drag home a recalcitrant wife or daughter.

As a matter of fact, old Farmer Cornassel, popping corn by his neighbors' fire, was really having more recreation than Mr. Wall Street. He was having social intercourse with some one whom he knew and wanted to see, and he was doing something which, if not highly exciting, was at least different from what he had been doing all day.

Like art, society, regarded as a finished product, is more perfect in the large centers of existence, where it is very elaborately staged and where the performers are well trained, than in the small cities and villages. But when it is regarded as recreation—and it is only as recreation that it has any claim to existence—the palm has to be awarded to the smaller communities where there is less attention to form and more to intercourse and activity.

After having once made up one's mind that recreation is an active process and that not all the money in the world can provide it for one unless one puts one's mind or one's muscles, as the case may be, busily to work in a way that exercises them differently from the way in which they have been exercised by

one's business—these decisions having been made, it only remains for one to determine upon the sort of recreation one wants and needs. Most of us probably need physical recreation all the time after we reach maturity; every day there is the waste of the day to be repaired, and a sort of muscular stupidity to be overcome. And yet, before one too glibly prescribes the rejuvenating sports to all the world of adults, one should recall the old story of the physician who sternly bade his new patient walk at least three miles a day, only to learn afterward that the unfortunate man was a letter carrier! There are those to whom very few athletic exercises would provide any real recreation, so much physical exercise do they obtain in the daily round of business. The something one does must be something different, if one is to be made over by it.

There was a certain famous scholar and divine in Cambridge, the library of whose summer home was sometimes a shock to the newcomer. It was full of detective stories—good ones, which could be respectably labeled "classics;" poor ones; indifferent ones; some that he himself would be the first to call "trash." They were the books upon which his mind rested. It was a mind that would not "quit" at closing time—it persisted in wanting to be active even when it was full of Greek and Biblical lore; and then it was that its owner turned to the recreation of mystery stories.

Some people have taken their recreation in the study of botany, or in learning to distinguish, among the fifty-

seven varieties of fungi, which were the edible and which the deadly. Some people have found recreation in sitting through Russian performances of Ibsen's "Ghosts." There is, of course, no disputing about tastes! Some women have discovered in themselves a passion for knitting which had lain dormant during their youth; and their friends have learned to forgive them their Christmas presents of mufflers, sweaters, bed socks, and "nightingales" for the sake of the obvious benefit and delight they derived from the manufacture of these things. One may apply to recreation the latest theory of art appreciation. One instinctively admires what fulfills some thwarted side of one's nature. "All I could never be, all men ignored in me"—that is what I thrill with joy to see expressed on canvas, in marble, in music," say the theorists.

And so, for recreative purposes, probably those pursuits which are most alien to our usual fashion of life are the ones we should adopt. Are we stout, of sedentary habit, and do we believe that "safety first" are the two noblest words ever uttered or penned? We should take up horseback riding or aviation. Do we loathe domesticity and are we happiest when we are distributing suffrage pamphlets at street corners? A course in the cooking school for us! And so on and so on.

For, after all, the only thing really required of recreation is that it should recreate those who practice it. And the only forms of it to be avoided are those whose names are finger posts on the road to the sanitarium.



The Unmaking of Pacifist Taber



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

AMONG apothegms that seem to hit the target of truth is: "Misery loves company."

However, that saw may not wholly account for the fact that Eli Taber, Quaker elder, dropped in on Cap'n Aaron Sproul one afternoon. From three to five in the afternoon, the cap'n was daily enthroned in his office as the president of the Scotaze board of trade.

Friend Taber did not indicate that he was seeking common misery; he seemed to be exemplifying the fact that rancor has an instinct of its own which can detect similar sentiment in others.

The cap'n was alone in his glory and Friend Taber asked if he might be allowed to bolt the door.

"Because thee knows as well as I know that when folks hold converse about the devil, the fiend comes close to listen. I want to say a few words to thee about Hiram Look."

"Then you'd better bolt the door," advised the cap'n grimly. "There's a good deal of truth in what you say."

"I see that thee is harboring thoughts like my thoughts. I have guessed as much. That is why I have come to pass a few words with thee."

From the open windows of a hall near at hand boomed the bellowing of band music.

Friend Taber sat down and listened, fixing upon the cap'n a particularly morose stare.

"The devil is still cock-a-whooping," he remarked with venom.

"If you're referring to the afternoon practice by Look's Liberty Silver Cornet Band, I shan't object to the rating you're giving it," stated the cap'n.

"I have suspected that I knew thy heart in this matter. The forefathers of the Society of Friends never countenanced music. But the love of it has ever been in my soul, though my father smashed my fiddle when he found me playing it behind the pasture wall and he even threw my jew's-harp into the well. Still, I have kept my love for music. But that——" He wagged his

hand in the direction of Look's Band.

"I catch your point, elder! You and I agree."

"I put away from me all my Quaker precepts and I subscribed fifty dollars when Hiram Look came around with the paper."

"I gave a hundred," admitted the cap'n, "being a man of public spirit and also head of the board of trade. But now I'm devilish sorry I have encouraged any such cussedness. They've got a fertilizer plant and a powder mill over in Palermo, but families will settle there in preference to this place, after they get one earful of that band."

"Thee misses my point," averred the elder. "I think the band is very promising. The music cheers the soul. I have been practicing on the tuba with intent to join."

The cap'n blinked and struggled with words.

"But now I have discovered Hiram Look's ungodly purpose," shouted the elder, beating his fist on the table. "He has come out with it! He is not going to use that band to soothe the soul and lift the thoughts of man to higher things. It is not to be a training here on earth for the harps of paradise."

An especially horrible explosion from bass horns in raucous discord, ending when a human voice was raised in equally horrible profanity, gave point to the elder's statement.

"You seem to have good judgment about the thing," agreed the cap'n. "Anse Withee wouldn't fit as a leader of harpists, and I have never heard that they had any musical programmy in the other place."

"Does thee know what Hiram Look is undertaking?"

"I do! He has started a pest in this town that's worse than the smallpox."

At that moment it became apparent that Friend Taber had other instincts as acute as the promptings of his rancor. There was the unmistakable and

masterly tread on the stairs which signaled the approach of the assertive Hiram Look.

"I told thee that the devil would come to hearken!" gritted the elder.

Mr. Look knocked with authority, waited a moment, and then pushed vigorously on the knob. The screws were forced from the decayed wood and the door banged open. Mr. Look did not seem to notice that he had forced the portal.

"Everything is moving fine, gents," he declared breezily. "And now I'm promulgating full plans so that the citizens of this town can come up on their hind legs and do some hollering to the real purpose. First, what has Look's Liberty Silver Cornet Band accomplished up to date?"

By visible effort, Cap'n Sproul controlled his desire to give in his ideas on the subject.

Mr. Look began to check items on his fingers.

"We have serenaded all subscribers to the band fund. Serenaded W. C. T. U., Ladies' Sewing Association, Ancient and Honorable Firemen's Association—supper furnished by me—Pastors' Union, Board of Trade, Patrons of Husbandry, and et cetry. It has been good practice, and we are ready to serenade other societies on request, come one, come all."

"You ain't going to overlook the poor farm, are you? And there are two steers and a stray hoss in the pound," suggested the cap'n.

"Look-a-here, are you trying some more of that salt-hoss sarcasm of yours on me?"

"There's nothing like being unanimous. But if you don't want any suggestions from the public, I'll keep still," said the cap'n, with suspicious meekness.

Mr. Look was diverted from his baleful scrutiny of his townsman by the voice of Friend Taber.

"I have a few words to say to thee, Hiram Look——"

"You're just the man I want to talk to, right here and now," interposed Hiram, with the impetuous voice and force that overrode men in their discussions with him. "I saw you come in here and I chased along."

"Thee must wait till I have had my say."

"Take it on a day when I've got more time, Taber. You Quakers are too slow for a busy man on his busy day. Hold on! Listen! You all know that I have put the word 'Liberty' into the name of my band. This is the day of Liberty—it's in everybody's mouth. It means something—more than it ever meant before. It's the watchword of the nations! Patriotism is a solemn thing in these days. In this town we have got to have a solemn occasion in order to put patriotism on the right basis—give it the proper flavor, so to speak. Now I don't want to pry into your private affairs, Taber, but it's understood in this town that you're going to marry the Widow Alfaretta Wagge—and it's so, ain't it?"

"Thee has no right——"

"Yes, I have, too! I'm acting for patriotism in a public matter where an awakening of the spirit of the people is needed. Yes or no, now, and be quick with it—or I shall go direct to the widow and say you denied it and shall deal with her."

"I tell thee my marriage is no public affair."

"So you're going to get married. Very well! Why didn't you come out like a man and say so, without delaying the procession and getting under the elephant's feet?" demanded the old showman. "Now you're the man to put the thing up to the widow in a smooth, genteel, and sooavable manner. Seeing that you had grit enough to propose to her, you ought to have spunk enough to do this other trick. At any rate, you

have shown that you know how to get around her on an important matter." He advanced on Friend Taber with forefinger upraised and wagging. "You go tell her that, in the interests of patriotism and in order to have a solemn occasion that will impress the town and stir the war spirit I am trying to rouse here, we want to give her first husband some honors."

Friend Taber bristled.

"How would thee give honors to a man who has been dead and buried for five years?"

"He was Captain Zenas Wagge of the Civil War, wasn't he? He never had any real honors shown when he was alive, did he? When he died, she buried him practically in her front yard. That's no place for a hero to lie. If you're going to marry her, you don't want him to lie there, do you? Fine thing for you to sit in the front window on a rainy day and read the inscription on his gravestone! So you go on and tell her that myself and the citizens propose to dig him up and escort him to the regular graveyard with the Liberty Band and a parade. She'll take it all right, coming from you. Or if you don't step into the breach like a public-spirited citizen, I'll go to her myself—and when I grab in on anything, something always rips—don't you forget that, Taber!"

For a Quaker, vowed to meekness and to peace, Eli Taber displayed a countenance that did not correspond with his professions. His gray pallor of rage matched his beard and his eyes glittered. He barked once or twice, wordlessly, and then turned to Cap'n Sproul, seeking assistance.

"I implore thee to talk to him. I am a Friend, and I have never learned the words which befit an occasion like this."

"I never like to tackle a thing unless I can do it justice," confessed the cap'n. "Since quitting the quarterdeck of the *Jefferson P. Benn*, I have allowed my-



Hiram nested his plug hat in the hook of his arm and exhibited his best air of politeness and deference to a lady.

self to get out of practice considerably. I don't feel equal to the job."

"Do I understand you two angle-worms to say that showing honors to a war hero like I have suggested won't be the grandest thing this town ever undertook?" demanded Showman Look with much heat. "Don't you know that the real reason why I started my band was to stir war spirit here?"

"Yes, that's it!" squealed the reproachful Quaker. "I have come here to-day to expose thee and thy ungodly and un-Christian plans to Aaron Sproul, in order that he may unmask thee and restrain thee. Thee took my money—the money of a Friend—the money of a man of peace—on pretense that thee would give us heart-soothing music to cheer our souls. And now thee is going to beat the loud alarum which calls

our young men to war! Thee is a devil! Thee has embezzled my money! I shall have the law on thee!"

"Swaller back those words or I'll bat your ear wax for you!" declared Hiram. He advanced menacingly.

"I am a Quaker and I shall not fight with thee."

"Take back what you said!"

"I am a man of truth and I shall not put myself in a falsehood for thy sake."

Mr. Look, in spite of Cap'n Sproul's vigorous protests, set clutch on the Quaker's neck and spanked his cheeks with considerable vigor.

Friend Taber, when released, did not offer to retaliate, nor had he struggled when Hiram had manhandled him.

"So that's your idea of getting along in this world, as it's constituted, is it?" inquired Hiram with acrimony.

"Thee is a bloody and a brutal man—and I shall not resist thee. But I will cry thy shame from the house-tops."

"I am not ashamed, Taber," said Hiram stoutly. "You're the one to be ashamed. The two of you ought to be ashamed. You're slackers. This is a time when men have got to stand up for their rights. I propose to wake this town up. I'm going to use my brass band to do it. I'll show you something when the Stalwart Reserves come down the street, with the Scotaze Militia, the Cadets——"

"Thee is tearing poor boys from their mothers' arms!" wailed the elder.

"When the roll is called, I propose to have this town hold up its head with the rest of the world," insisted the old showman. His ire increased. He turned on Cap'n Sproul. "You'd better go get a broad-brimmed hat and a drab suit, so as to match up with your friend, here! Aaron Sproul, I took you——"

"If you're taking me for a Quaker, Look, there's a bad twist in your spy-glass and you'd better take fresh bearings. You confounded old bass drum, if you dare to bang out one more boomp addressed to me, intimating that you're a better American citizen than I am, I'll hop over this table and give you the whole seventeen figures of the Portygee fandango."

"But you have been insulting to me ever since I stepped through that door."

"He believes as I believe in regard to thee," insisted Friend Taber. "Thee is a devil who wants to dabble in the blood of——"

"Taber, any time I need a Quaker to express my opinions on current topics for me, I'll drop you a post card and give you thirty days' notice," snapped the cap'n. "You shut up!" He came around the table and stood in front of Hiram.

"I have told you a good many times

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in the past, and I tell it all over to you again, Hiram, that you're a pretty good sort of a citizen except when you get one of your circus fits onto you. That cussed band of yours is only another one of your fits. They can't play. They never can play. It ain't in 'em to play. You haven't been contented to pick out a few who knew a little something about music."

"I don't propose to have a war-spirit band made up of a dinky dozen. I've got sixty men," asserted Hiram boldly.

"And you have made sixty homes in this village miserable, to say nothing of homes where there ain't any old horn, but are nigh enough to hear the gad-awful hootings till 'most midnight. The principal reason why folks will go to war from this town will be because war won't be so harrowing to the feelings as that Liberty Band of yours. If they'd pick some place in the woods and go there and stay together—but they don't. They scatter all over the place and hoomp and squall separate! I'm out open and frank with you. The only folks in this town who like your band are the ones who are in it—and even they would have horror of conscience if they could stand off and hear themselves toot."

"Your judgment about music amounts to that!" declared Hiram, snapping finger into palm derisively. "If you are not standing in with this Quaker against the war spirit I'm trying to stir up in town, you and I will have no further argument."

"I only stand in with him against the desecration of a grave."

"Giving a hero what he is entitled to, whether he is dead or not, isn't desecrating anything. Serenades ain't solemn. Band concerts ain't solemn. This is a solemn time in this country, and we've got to have a solemn ceremony here in this village, to make patriotism sink into the hearts of the people. I say, I'm going ahead. Taber,

think again! Will *you* go ahead and help out as I have asked you to help?"

He turned from the cap'n when he asked the question, but Pacifist Taber was not in the room. The two chief disputants had been much occupied with each other and the elder had escaped on tiptoe.

"When a man's mind is skeowwowed on patriotism and he hasn't got spirit enough to stand up for his native land or even put up his fins to protect himself," stated Mr. Look, "then he's all wrong on everything. That pusillanimous critter, rather than help the war spirit in this town, would prefer to be stubbing his toe over number one's gravestone for the rest of his life every time he walks across the dooryard. According to my notion, the Widow Wagg can be made to see a point when it's put up to her right. I shall put it up to her. And if that Quaker gets in my way, I'll use a screwdriver and take him apart and put him together again in better running order."

The cap'n surveyed the old showman with rather sardonic scrutiny.

"I see there's considerable of the German emperor disposition about you," he suggested.

Hiram flared and choked on a profane word.

"You needn't get mad, because you can't scare me by getting mad," advised the cap'n. "What I was trying to hint was that if you keep on doing things, there comes a time when you can get even a Quaker mad enough to fight. I'd advise you to keep away from that widder."

"Oh," replied Hiram airily, "when a man has a disposition like he has just shown, and will stand without hitching and take a cuffing, you can't look for any special kick back, no matter what else you may do to him. The more I think of it, the more I feel that a Quaker is not a fit number two for a widow whose number one was a cap-

tain in the war. After I go down and talk with her, I may put the thing up to her in such a way that she'll make a fresh pick in the marriage market. I'm quite a matchmaker when I get interested. That Quaker called me some names I didn't relish. Yes, the more I think of it——"

Constable Nute walked in at that moment, displaying a meeching and apologetic air.

He held forth a document in timorous fashion toward Mr. Look.

"Law is law and orders is orders," he stammered. "I hate to take you up, but here's the warrant from the squire's office, and I reckon you'll have to come along."

"Take me up?" echoed Hiram. "You gander-shanked dogcatcher, you, do you dare to stand there and tell me that you have got any warrant for me?"

Constable Nute pushed the paper further toward Hiram.

"You might peecuse it and see just what it is," he suggested. "According to the peek I got at it, it isn't no pome on spring."

Mr. Look snatched, flapped the paper open, and read, his eyes distended, his cheeks dappled with raging blood.

"By the horn-gilled sowumpus that Barnum never caught," he bellowed, "that broad-brimmed, yaller-bellied, soppy yarn-sockful of meek and lowly muck has had me arrested on the charge of cheating by false pretenses! I'll kill him so sure as William Penn liked Injuns!"

"Hold on! You've got to admit that when you use a Quaker's money to help fight a war with, the Quaker has good reason to feel a little speck nippy about it," warned the cap'n.

"I shall have to take you over to the squire's office to see about the bail," ventured Nute, half important and half deprecatory.

"You'll have to be a damnation good man on your feet to beat me getting

there!" raved Hiram, galloping forth. "I want to see that Quaker!"

But Friend Taber had taken his prudent and peaceful way to other parts when Hiram arrived in the magistrate's office. The latter accepted the personal recognizance of the town's leading citizen and did not venture to suggest that less profanity would better suit the temple of the law.

Having made temporary peace with Justice, Mr. Look set out on the warpath.

He found Friend Taber exactly where he expected to find him—in the cozy sitting room of the widow.

"After what you have just done to me, you come and hide behind a woman's skirts, hey?" demanded Hiram with heat.

"I am in no ways afraid of thee," stated the elder. "Furthermore, if thee offers more violence to a man of peace, I'll have thee arrested for assault."

He spoke with assurance, for the Widow Wagg had posted herself between him and the intruder, and the widow was by no means of the shrinking-violet type; she was able and hearty and had rather more than a suspicion of mustaches on her upper lip.

"I advise you to mind your manners while you're in my house, Mr. Look.



Running a line from a corner of his house, he located a spot and used the shovel, uncovering a slab of stone set into the earth solidly.

That is, if you have any manners—which I much doubt after listening to what Eli has just told me. Haven't you grace and decency enough to let the dead rest in peace?"

Hiram nested his plug hat in the hook of his arm and exhibited his best air of politeness and deference to a lady.

"Mrs. Wagg, it isn't in that critter to explain my plans to you. He can't explain patriotism because he hasn't got any of it in him. He doesn't understand what honors are due to heroes, because he could no more be a hero

than a bulldog could preach a sermon on the Hard-shell Baptist doctrine. Your husband was a hero of which this town is proud, and I want to tell you how we propose to show that pride."

His manner plainly impressed the widow, and after ten minutes of glowing discourse on the virtues of the late Captain Wagg and able exposition of what the parade would mean in that crisis in the affairs of the country, Mr. Look perceived that he had won her.

"Captain Wagg served his country when he was alive, and if he could speak to us now, he would be anxious to serve it again," he concluded.

The widow's cheeks were pink and her eyes were bright.

"Captain Wagg was a noble man, and all his talk to me was how glad he was that he had been able to do something for his native land, Mr. Look. I must confess I get altogether a different notion of the thing, now that you have explained."

"But he wants to stir men up to war," objected Friend Taber. "War is wicked, and the men who encourage it are devils."

"That's a nice kind of a remark to make about a hero like Captain Wagg," suggested Hiram.

The widow turned gaze of disfavor on the elder.

"I certainly am surprised and shocked, Eli! Do you dare to call my husband a wicked man?"

"I wasn't saying a word about him. I am declaring my principles as a man of peace."

"Captain Wagg fought to make this country safe for his wife and other women," said Hiram loftily. "And the man who won't do the same to-day is a coward, and he can't excuse himself by being a Quaker."

"I must own up that there is a good deal of truth in what you say, Mr. Look," admitted the widow, inspired by her new emotions.

At that juncture, Friend Taber's looks did not harmonize with his peace declarations. He gritted his teeth and was distinctly savage.

"I want to inform thee, Hiram Look, that thee can't come in here and stir up trouble in family matters which do not concern thee. Thee is trying to prejudice this good woman against me. Thee wants her to make a show of sacred matters in order to satisfy thy hankering for pompous parade. I'll not allow thee to do it."

"There are some things I can manage for myself, Eli," declared the widow stiffly. "I have thought sometimes it would be better for the captain to rest in the regular cemetery, for I shall not always be here to care for his grave."

"Exactly," affirmed Hiram with enthusiasm. "And now is the time to tend to the job, when it can be done in style and aid the cause. I am your next-door neighbor, Mrs. Wagg, and you have always found me to be helpful and friendly, I'm sure."

"That is right, Mr. Look."

"And you'll find me so in this matter. It'll be all right to go ahead with the plans, won't it?"

"I'll take a day to consider and make sure, sir, but right now I feel that I'd be carrying out the captain's wishes if I allow you to go ahead."

"I have a word to say here," declared the elder stoutly. "Allow me to remind thee, Alfaretta, that by our prenuptial agreement, duly signed and lawfully executed, I have full power of attorney over all thy property and I will not allow the dead to be disturbed by this peacock parader and his warlike musicians. I will sue trespassers and put them in jail."

"You're a fine kind of a patriot, and I'm going to expose you to this town and see that you get yours for being a traitor to your country!" declaimed Mr. Look.

"I must remind you, Eli, that there's

a time for peace and then again there's a time for war," said the widow.

"There is never a right time for war or for stirring evil passions of fight," insisted Friend Taber. "If thee allows this thing to go on, Alfaretta, the newspapers will make mock of thee and of me. I will save thee from this bad man and from thyself. Thee will thank me in times to come."

"I don't want to pry into your private business, marm, but if I can't take a forkful of straw and a secondhand suit and wallop you up a better husband than this old-seed Quaker will make for you, then I'll eat the hunk of glass I used for thirty years in my circus lemonade!"

He started for the door.

"I have held myself in as long as I'm able for one session," he announced over his shoulder. "I'll come back and get your answer after the air is clearer."

He marched over onto his own premises, which adjoined the widow's home. From his side of the fence, he surveyed the little lot where the remains of the lamented Captain Wagg reposed. It was a minute triangle of ground commonly called a "heater piece." He began to pucker his brows after a time.

"Now supposing!" he muttered. "It may not be so. It probably ain't so. But stranger things have been true. And it's worth looking up, just to pass away the time."

He went into the house and got out the deed of his property and studied it carefully. Then he sallied out with a shovel and a tape measure. Running a line from a corner of his house, he located a spot and used the shovel, uncovering a slab of stone set into the earth solidly. The post bore a surveyor's number. Then he did more measuring in most careful manner and went all over the thing a second time to make certain. He straightened up from his task and saw the widow and

Friend Taber watching him with interest from a window. Inasmuch as he detected mute inquiry on their faces, he trudged over to the window, presenting himself before them with an amiable and patronizing grin.

The widow was not amiable.

"I really feel that you are taking too much for granted and are hurrying me too much, Mr. Look. I have not given you any authority as yet to go to measuring and planning."

"Correct you are, marm," acknowledged Hiram, not abating his smile.

"And the more I think of the matter, mindful of the fact that Eli and I are to be married right away, I feel that removing Captain Wagg with a parade will start all the tongues, and the tongues in this town are very sharp."

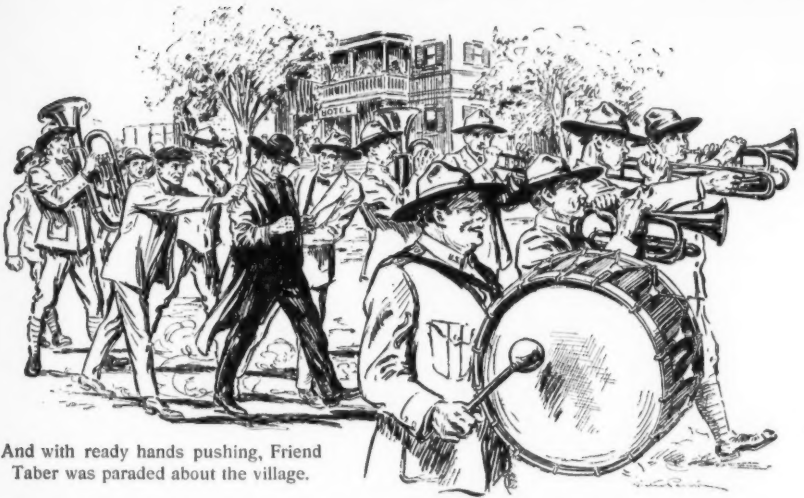
"Fasten a couple of them together and you can use 'em to shear sheep with," admitted Hiram.

"So I'll ask you to keep off my premises, sir, till I give consent—and I'm rather inclined to believe I will not consent."

"Suit yourself, marm, about the parade, if you're willing to let that old-seed Quaker squeeze all your patriotism out of you and don't want your husband to receive the honors due to him. But I must give you notice, here and now, that when I'm on that graveyard lot, I'm on my own premises, as my deed and measurements will show, and if you don't believe me, we'll leave it to any land surveyor you want to name. I further serve notice that I want to use that land to raise war potatoes on, and you'll have to put the captain somewhere else so I shall not be desecrating the grave of a hero."

"You are a man of sin and I do not believe thy word!" exploded Friend Taber.

"Take this deed and that tape measure and convince yourself," advised Hiram. "Now, seeing that you've got to move the captain, anyway, you may



And with ready hands pushing, Friend Taber was paraded about the village.

as well make a grand job of it, according to my plans."

"If it's true and you do own the lot, I'll buy it," faltered the widow. "It has always been thought——"

"Lots of things are thought that ain't so—same being proved when the measure is laid on, marm. The lot ain't for sale—can't be bought."

"But you wouldn't take such a mean advantage of me!"

"In war times, marm, lots of things are done that wouldn't be done or condoned in times of peace. We are in war, and this town needs a solemn occasion that can be properly celebrated. Do you agree to the parade?"

"No!" blazed the widow. "You're taking advantage of me!"

"Then I must order you to remove the captain. He is trespassing."

"How dare you say that about my noble, dead husband?"

Hiram lifted his plug hat and bowed politely.

"Nobody respects a hero more than I do, marm. But ownership is ownership, and business is business."

"I wish I were a man!" shrilled

Widow Wagg, made suddenly furious by Hiram's tone and his provoking grin.

"I'd—I'd come out there and smash that old stovepipe hat down over your ears and kick you off my premises!"

"That's a bad frame of mind for a lady to be in, marm, seeing that you've got only a Quaker to fight your battles for you."

"Eli, for goodness' sake, haven't you any of a man's spunk left in you?" demanded the widow. "I am being persecuted and abused right before your face and eyes! They're threatening to make a spectacle of my poor dead husband. Be a man instead of a Quaker!"

Friend Taber slowly shook his head.

"Torment is inside me, Alfaretta, but the principles of a lifetime and the precepts of my ancestors are not so easily overcome. War gains nothing in the long run."

"Then peace has lost you a wife in short order!" she declared, venom in her tones. "I don't ever want to hear or see a man again as long as I live! Get out of my house! Go!"

"But I'm sure I can make thee understand by discourse how——"

She slapped his face.

"If you were near enough, Hiram Look, I'd serve you in the same fashion. If you don't go away from my window, I'll scald you! Out of my house, Eli Taber! Go home and sit down and hug those Quaker principles and kiss your precepts. You won't get any more privileges here!"

Friend Taber, on his melancholy way to his own home, stopped for a moment at Hiram Look's gate. He stared sourly at that gentleman's expansive expression of good humor.

"Once a fellow wrote a pome about nobody but the brave deserving the fair. You'd better go post up and wake up," advised the marplot.

From near-by houses came various toots, squeaks, and bellowings of tortured musical instruments, evidence that Look's Liberty Silver Cornet Band members had dispersed to their homes for individual practice.

"Yes, Taber, you'd better wake up and get into line. If you don't, I'm afraid something worse will happen to you. Traitors ain't popular in this country at the present time."

"Now thee sees what thee has done —thee has spoiled my life," lamented the Quaker.

"Well, she is a good, brisk, hearty woman and deserves somebody who won't spoil *her* life. She is better off without you."

"After what thee has done to me, does thee dare to sit there and give me Chessy-cat grins?"

"Sure! Nobody is afraid of you, Taber. When nobody is afraid of a man or a nation, said man or nation must expect to be used as a doormat by folks who feel like wiping their feet. I don't want to rub it into you too much, Taber. I ain't naturally a cruel sort of a chap. But you represent the wrong principle just now. You need a wallop. That's right, Taber! Men like you are holding this town back

from doing its full duty. If you don't look sharp, we'll have to make an example of you. I have found out that you're making a business of dogging me and others and are advising young men to run away and hide. Nasty trick that was, having me arrested. Are you going to press that charge?"

"Yes!" barked the elder. "Thee needs to have thy bumptiousness taken down!"

"Look-a-here, Taber, I'll do a little taking down on my own hook, and after I have taken you down, they'll have to send the pieces back to the factory to have you put together again. Do you still threaten?"

"Yes!"

"Then mind your eye!"

On that basis they parted.

Hiram Look had told the truth, as he saw it, when he said that he was not by nature a cruel man. But opposition made him impatient, interference in any of his plans angered him, and a threat to injure him made him eager to get his own blow in first. Therefore, when he opened up the case of Elder Eli Taber before the band boys that evening, he allowed his resentment to show a bit too plainly.

"Any little matter like that is easy fixed," declared Anse Withee, band leader. "I'll furnish the molasses if anybody else will chip in with a pillow-case full of feathers and a rail. Fife and drum will escort parade to the town line."

"Anything like that would disgrace the town worse than Taber disgraces it," objected Hiram. "I don't approve of rough stuff. But I must say that I think a little genteel notice should be taken of his stand. Having me arrested to-day on the charge that I got his contribution by false pretenses would suggest that he thinks he ain't getting his money's worth of band music."

"Then let's go and give him a sere-

nade," suggested Brad Trufant, trombone. "He may relish some such tune as 'I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier.'"

"I'll agree to the serenade," agreed the band's sponsor. "The Widow Wagg has given him the mitten because he wasn't man enough to stand up for her and protect her, and he must be pretty well down in the dumps. Music may refresh him considerably. Go ahead!"

"Wouldn't be a man and protect her, hey?" inquired the resourceful Leader Withee. "Well, that suggests something to me quick as a flash. I'll admit the molasses and feathers idea was too raw. But this one isn't. It ought to bring the blush of shame to his cheeks. Listen! Let's collect about a dozen lengths of old stovepipe and set 'em around the widow's dooryard like as if they were cannons and put up a sign saying: 'Quaker Artillery. All Women Protected.'"

That idea was indorsed as both humorous and spectacular, and it was not thought that the widow's feelings would be seriously hurt, seeing that she had dealt sternly, herself, with Eli Taber's lack of manly spirit.

"Furthermore," said Mr. Look, "in view of the stand she has taken in regard to the captain's grand parade, she shows lack of real patriotism and needs to be woke up. Maybe she will wake up now that that shucked clam of a Quaker ain't cuddling close to her any more. I have found out that she is apt to change her mind about every ten minutes—like most women I have met—and if we can help to change it the right way and keep it changed, we'll be doing her a good turn."

With that indorsement, the expedition was quickly organized.

Volunteers went hunting for the stovepipe and the band marched to the house of Friend Taber, pacifist by precept and principle.

The edge of the affair was dulled by the fact that Pacifist Taber refused to show his head, even after three selections had been played in the band's best style. Shouted summons failed. Even a good-natured mob finds it hard to keep within the bounds of law and order. Therefore, several of the more enthusiastic citizens went in and brought Friend Taber out, hustling him a bit in their general glee.

When the crowd demanded a speech, the assembled patriots were informed by Pacifist Taber that they were fiends and renegades and that they all belonged in the same jail where Hiram Look, their chief, would go as soon as the law took its course.

It is not difficult to develop malice even in a good-natured mob.

Somebody who had treasured an old Confederate flag as a souvenir of days dead and gone ran home and fetched that banner, its staff was lashed to the pacifist's back, and, with the band leading and playing "John Brown's Body" and with ready hands pushing, Friend Taber was paraded about the village.

He was informed regularly on the route that he wasn't fit to carry any other kind of a flag, and eventually he was escorted to the residence of Widow Wagg and was installed in the midst of his artillery and left there to meditate on the peculiar madness of war-inspired neighbors; nobody bothered to remove the rebel flag from his back.

There were citizens who met Friend Taber later that evening when he was on his way back to his home. He was walking in the middle of the street and his head was up, and he seemed to be talking to the stars; at any rate, he was speaking in moderately loud tones, and he was not talking to anybody in Scotaze. Folks who overheard him did not catch the drift of his remarks.



They ran and yelled and rolled in the street to extinguish the fire. "Come back and get some more of it, you hounds of Satan!" screeched Pacifist Taber.

When Hiram Look went forth in the morning, he saw that the mounted stovepipes had not been removed from the Widow Wagg's dooryard.

When he came back to his house at noon, they were still there, grim and pointed reminder of the overnight foolishness of a skylarking community. The big sign, rudely painted, heralded: "Quaker Artillery. All Women Protected."

It occurred to Mr. Look that this was not a prepossessing exhibit for the eyes of strangers visiting the village. He stepped politely to the widow's door, and when she answered his ring, he offered to take away the battery.

"I forbid you to lay finger on one bit of it," she commanded firmly. "It is going to stay there to the shame of this town until the miserable pups here come to a realizing sense of what they

have done to insult an unprotected woman. I have a double-barreled shotgun standing here in my entryway, and I'll shoot the man who commits trespass on my premises. That's final—and that's for you!" She snapped decisive fingers under his nose. "Is there anything else?"

Mr. Look backed away and allowed that there was nothing else just then.

There was consternation in the village when it became generally known that the widow of their war hero insisted on maintaining the exhibition which had been set forth in her doorway. It was felt that the newspapers would soon be publishing stories of the grotesque affair, probably with pictures, and whether Scotaze were laughed at or reproached, the community's shame would attach to it. A contrite delegation of prominent citizens waited on the widow and pleaded. Her eyes merely grew brighter and her lips were set tighter. At last Cap'n Sproul went, as president of the board of trade. The widow agreed with him heartily in all he said about the mental and moral qualities of Hiram Look and his Liberty Band and she did not flinch when he rounded out his little speech with a few smacking deep-sea oaths. But she would not retreat one jot from her stand.

"This town has got a reputation to keep up, even if some of the folks in it ain't fit for dogfish bait," insisted the cap'n. "You're a taxpayer here, yourself, and you ought to have some pride in seeing that we ain't shamed before the whole world."

"I want the whole world to know how this town treats its lone women, Cap'n Sproul. And you needn't twit me about being a taxpayer. I'm one all right, and you socked extra taxes on to me when you were selectman—and that's another way the town uses women who haven't got a man to stand up for them."

"Then I must inform you that I feel called upon—being president of our board of trade and having had nothing to do with this cussedness—to heave those things over the fence and let Hiram Look tote 'em away."

Widow Wagg plucked her shotgun from behind the door.

"You may be president of the board of trade, sir, but I am president of these premises, and if you presume to trespass in my yard, I can inform you that Doctor Breed will have a steady job for some time, picking bird shot out of you. If you don't think I'm a determined woman and mean what I say, you'd better take another look at me."

The cap'n took the look and retired from the field.

He went directly to Hiram Look, but it was not because the widow's remark suggested that action; he knew he had business with the war lord of Scotaze.

"That bunch of pirates and scavengers that you have disguised under the name of a Silver Cornet Band put those things into the Widow Wagg's doorway. Now you go take 'em out."

"I offered to take 'em out. She wouldn't let me do it."

"She wouldn't let me, either, but that's nothing to do with it. You get those stovepipes out of sight and save the reputation of this town or I'll have your whole band indicted for criminal mischief and then you can all assemble in the county jail and play 'This Is the Life.' Now act, and act blast-nation prompt!"

"But she keeps a gun behind the door," wailed Hiram.

"You pretend to be drumming up war spirit with that Liberty Brass Band. Now show spirit and less brass."

"I reckon it has got to be done, and I'll get the boys together to-night and tend to it," agreed Mr. Look. "But

I hope you won't go around and say anything about it. We've got to keep it all quiet so as to surprise her."

Cap'n Sproul met Friend Taber later in the day and he did not think he was betraying any pledge to Hiram Look when he asked the pacifist if he thought he had any influence with the Widow Wagg.

"I must confess to thee that I do not think I have. Why does thee ask?"

"Because that Quaker artillery stuff has got to come out of her yard, and if it can't be done peaceable, it has got to be done some other way. She says it shan't come out!"

Friend Taber's eyes glistened.

"I don't blame her," he declared.

"That's funny talk from a Quaker, standing up for cannons, even if they are only imitation ones."

"I might say that I am standing up for them because they are named Quaker. But that would not be the whole truth. I am glad she is keeping them there to shame this town."

"Well, they'll be yanked out to-night by fair means or foul. That's one job that blasted band can do, and they've got to do it. Only I hoped you could argue with the widow and have her act sensible."

Cap'n Sproul marched on and left Friend Taber standing in the road. Again Friend Taber lifted his chin and talked with somebody unseen. A citizen who passed and who remembered said afterward that the elder seemed to be arguing some question either with or about ancestors.

The volunteers for the service of dismantling the widow's battery of defense did not fare forth that night as to a serenade; they carried no horns or tubas. They went on tiptoe and filed into the widow's dooryard warily, feeling pretty sure that she was asleep, for all her windows were dark. But before a hand was laid on a piece of the artillery something amazing hap-

pened. A hissing sheet of flame burst from the mouth of one of the stove-pipes. In a few seconds another pipe belched a torrent of fire. In the glare a man was seen running along the line, putting a torch to the other "cannons." The fire carried with it little blazing wisps which scorched the faces of the intruders and set their clothing alight in many places. They ran and yelled and rolled in the street to extinguish the fire.

Those who were last in the retreat saw the face of Pacifist Taber lighted by the flare.

"Come back and get some more of it, you hounds of Satan!" he screeched. "There's plenty more of it, you devils! You'll drink fire in Tophet later—come here and get used to it now! I'm a Quaker, am I, and don't know how to fight or how to protect the best woman in all the world? Come back and see whether I do or not!"

Hiram Look accepted that invitation and went back. Curiosity as well as resentment actuated him. This transformation of a Quaker was truly interesting.

"I have been thinking it over," yelled Friend Taber. "Thee is right, man of sin! There is a time for fighting!" He yanked off his coat and tossed it on the ground. He threw his broad-brimmed hat on the coat. "Lie there, Quaker!" he shouted.

Then, before Hiram Look came to a realizing sense of all that this unmaking of a pacifist portended, the defender of the fortress danced up to the old showman and beat a tattoo with wiry little fists all over the Look countenance.

"Merciful sakes, Eli Taber, are you out there fighting?" demanded the voice of the widow from a window.

"Yes, my dearest, for thee and thy sake!" reported her lover, kicking at Hiram when the latter turned and ran,

for to master this maniac-for-a-moment was impossible. "It's time to fight when a woman needs a man's protection. I gave them fire with gunpowder, and now if any one of them dares to come back, I'll give them——"

"Eli, don't you dare to swear out there in public!"

"No, I will not say it. I will always obey thee in all things."

The widow's voice was softer when she spoke next, and he came close under the window to listen when she summoned him.

There were neighbors who had their ears out by that time, but nobody was ever able to tell what Eli and Alfarretta said to each other there after the battle. But when Eli came early the next morning and fired the stovepipes over the fence into Hiram Look's yard, it was generally reckoned by all onlookers that Elder Taber had retaken his place as master of the heart and the affairs of the Widow Wagg.

At any rate, Hiram Look figured it that way, for he came over to the

widow's house during the day and handed her a legal document.

"It's a deed for the little lot," he said, "and the hero shall never be disturbed. I reckon I have been wrong in the whole proposition. I hope you'll overlook everything."

"I'm glad to meet you as you meet me, Mr. Look. I respect and honor you and thank you."

Hiram jerked his thumb in the direction of Friend Taber, who was setting the yard to rights.

"Having a new hero show up like he done last night, I reckon—I kind of guess—— Well, it's all right again, isn't it?"

The widow flushed prettily and nodded her head.

"Then suppose you consider that deed a sort of wedding present," suggested Mr. Look, raising his plug hat and backing down the steps. "I can appreciate a hero just as well as anybody can."

And there was a black-and-blue spot under his right eye!



THE HOUSE

MY love for you is a little house,
With one low door
And one small window to the sea—
No more.

My love for you is a little house
Where Joy dwells, lone.
Outside the safe and bolted door,
Grief makes his moan.

Joy draws the curtain, slips the lock,
In peace to bide.
Some day Grief will silently
Creep inside.

My love for you is a little house
Where Joy dwells sure,
And sings, behind the curtain length
And the bolted door.

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.



MEDORA AND THE AGE OF REASON

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "The Tradition of a Lover."
"At Wildacres," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LOVRIEN PRICE

What a girl who decided to marry learned about love.

MEDORA was twenty-nine, and she was tired of working. Resolutely she admitted the humiliating fact to herself—she wanted, ardently, earnestly, to become a parasite. Eight years before, when she had stepped into the world arena from her daisy chain, or rose garland, or whatever floral festoon her college decreed for its graduating class, she would have known how fitly to characterize so contemptible an ambition. Now, though she realized the spiritual deterioration of the eight years, she didn't care. She was tired, and she wanted to be a parasite with such fervency that she meant to become one. That meant that she determined to marry.

Medora was not the sort, either by temperament or by caste, that is importuned to enter flowery paths of ease through any other door than the church's. And her family were so used to her stalwart intention to stand upon her own feet that the idea would never have occurred to them to offer her other than a temporary respite from labor. Besides, it had other daughters in training to step out of the floral wreath into the world arena.

She had acquired sensible business habits in the eight years during which she had progressed from a friendly visitor to an executive secretary in the offices of the City Consolidated Char-

ities. Desiring to marry, she looked about her for a satisfactory *parti*—a man neither too young nor too old; sufficiently prosperous to insure a successful parasitism; healthy—for Medora subscribed to all the eugenic theory of her age; congenial; progressive, but not a radical; conservative, but not a stick-in-the-mud; a man whose relatives were possible, but who was not a snob; and, of course, a man who had nothing whatever to do with the Consolidated—or unconsolidated—Charities of the city. Medora respected her work and believed in its importance to the community, but she had attained the professional woman's disillusionment about the men of her guild, and would have preferred to earn her own living forever rather than marry an uplifter.

That she should have discovered, easily and speedily, one who met her requirements speaks volumes for the standard of masculine worth in her town. He was Gerald Housman, thirty-two, five feet eleven, one hundred and seventy pounds, eupeptic, athletic, a linen importer by inheritance and, also by inheritance, a young man of means, of business acumen and energy, of decent standards, of agreeable connection. To these admirable qualities, he added, on his own account, a really remarkable approach in golf

and a record for having toured the White Mountains in his Baxter without ever going into low gear.

Gerald knew Medora slightly. To his recollection, she was that serious girl whom his sisters invited to dinners whenever there was to be a professor, a literary man, uplifter, or another "dead one" at the hospitable Housman board. He was vaguely aware that she was rather pretty, in a serious way, but he had never got on very far with her. She did not play golf; she did not drive a car; she did not know anything about the linen business; and she had once raised her finely penciled eyebrows and said "Really?" when Gerald told her how he had chuckled over "Penrod."

In other words, Medora, in deciding to go after Mr. Gerald Housman as a means of entrance into the blissful, restful, roseate state of parasitism, had considerable of a handicap to overcome.

However, she was intelligent and she was trained. And she was not hampered by being the least little bit in the world in love with Mr. Gerald Housman or with any one else. Love in any degree is fatal to clear vision and steady effort; it is full of shynesses, timidities, black fears of unworthiness, quivering dread of being hurt. Medora, not being in love, was perfectly aware that, as a rather pretty, thoroughly intelligent, virtuous, healthy, capable, kindly female of the species, she was a good match for any man.

It wasn't, of course, all going to be perfectly plain sailing; she must attract his attention to her, and she must keep it attracted. She must prove herself congenial; she thought of his joy in "Penrod"—she herself read Sidney Smith for humor—and she shivered a little. Still, there he was—desirable, worthy to be saved from the snares of the giggling, slangy, "good-time" sirens whose clutches he had thus far miraculously avoided.

She read "Penrod"—it wasn't such

a task as she had anticipated; she had herself put up for membership in the Farview Country Club—being admitted at once, because they needed the dues of new members that season; and she invested a portion of her savings in the runabout, only three years old, which her married brother and his wife found no longer adequate to their needs. She loathed athletics, but she had a purpose transcending her loathings.

Fate was with her, as when is fate not with the strong willed and clear visioned? The first day she took her Bayeau out alone and propelled it—with great fear in her heart and awful rigidity in her arm muscles—along the highroad toward the Farview Country Club, she encountered a sand pile at the foot of a hill—an innocent little sand pile in which children might have loved to play, left there by the road menders. She skidded gently into the ditch beyond the sand pile; she stalled the Bayeau's engine; then she dismounted and surveyed the scenery, in search of aid.

Looking not quite so efficient as usual, and, therefore, rather more attractive—moreover, she had had the good sense to buy a decently becoming motor hat—she stood. And fate sent Gerald Housman, in the Baxter of White Mountain fame, along the road.

All the girls whom Gerald knew were perfectly capable of getting their cars out of difficulties. It touched him to find one less self-reliant. He hastily drove the Baxter the remaining mile to the Farview garage, and he was driven back in a club car to the place where he had left Medora. Her grateful eyes shone very prettily beneath the pink lining of her hat brim. He gave her a lesson in emerging from ditches, and then one in steering a straight course through sand. He advised her strongly against taking golf lessons from the club instructor. MacAngus'



Looking not quite so efficient as usual, and, therefore, rather more attractive, she stood. And fate sent Gerald Housman.

approach, he said, was laughable. And she was quite mistaken in thinking that any sort of instruction would suffice for a beginner; it was first instruction that counted! If she would permit him—

Medora said that she would.

He went home that evening glowing with one of the purest joys known to man—that of the pedagogue. In what

other employment is he ever permitted to feel at once boundlessly superior and yet perfectly free from the taint of superiority? A pink pongee hat lining and a pair of dark eyes were blended in his glow of kindly satisfaction—and the fact that she said she had been reading "Penrod." A nice little thing! Why did his sisters always

place her with the "dead ones" at dinners?

Medora took her lessons, under varied hat brims, for two months. At home they said she was abominably selfish with the Bayeau. At the office they said she was looking a lot better than she had looked in the winter, but that she was dreadfully absentminded about her work.

And then, suddenly, she came down to breakfast one morning and told her next youngest sister, Annabel, that she might learn to drive the runabout; she, Medora, did not expect to be using it much for the rest of the summer. And she went to the office and told the head of the City Consolidated Charities that she would cancel her vacation allotment of two weeks in September; she didn't need a holiday, and didn't want one, and wouldn't take one! Both Annabel and the Charities chief were quite aware that her heavy eyes betokened a sleepless—perhaps a tearful—night.

And then Medora plunged herself into the work of the office with a grimness of efficiency she had never before attained. She wore an uncompromisingly ugly and unbecoming sailor hat, and rigidly tucked the little curls at the back of her neck into a net. And she never smiled and cooed as she talked into the telephone on her desk. It rang less often than before.

Medora had, on the evening before her accentuated return to her ancient manner, achieved that which she had set out to achieve. Gerald Housman had proposed to her. The door of that paradise of parasitism for which she had longed had been invitingly opened to her. There had been a moon, and a band—it had been on the piazza of the Farview Clubhouse—and a lovely fragrance of honeysuckle. Nothing had been lacking—except that Medora had been again the Medora of the daisy chain or the rose garland. She had become again the Medora of romantic

ideals, of which the chief is that love must come unsought. She would rather labor all her days than take the thing for which she had deliberately and cold-bloodedly plotted!

For Medora had fallen deeply, irretrievably, in love with her destined victim; and with loathing she turned her back upon that adventuress of the colored hat brims and engaging ignorances, who had so efficiently succeeded in what she had undertaken! To be intelligent, deliberate, about love was a sin, and she would not touch the reward thereof! She couldn't tell him it had all been a trap into which he had walked—the runabout, the golf bag, the pink-brimmed hat. She couldn't destroy his ideal of her to any such extent. So she had let him depart with the hurt conviction that he was not serious enough to command her deepest regard.

If Annabel had not skidded in the same sand pile, and been rescued by the same rescuer of dames, this tale of Medora and the rule of reason might have been a tragedy. But as she listened to Annabel's excited, youthful account of the adventure—she had been silent about her own—she looked at Annabel, lithe and brown and twenty, and she saw possibilities. A feeling stronger than any she had ever known welled up in her; the daisy chain and its idealities had no conception of it, and deliberate young women bent on achieving parasitism were equally ignorant of it. It was jealousy, basest and least intelligent of human emotions!

It sent Medora flying to a sound-proof telephone booth in the drug store at the corner; in her parents' house the instrument was not meant for privacy. With beating heart she called a number.

"Oh, Gerald," she cried, "I've been a fool—a fool! And I have a confession to make—and— No, I'm at the drug store at the corner— Yes, I'll wait, I'll wait!"

"Adele, Ltd."

By Winona Godfrey

Author of "This is New York," "The Eternal Surrender," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. L. LAMBDIN

He had come on to meet the distinguished family of his fiancée, when he quite unexpectedly met his old friend, Adele.

HALFDAY had come to New York to meet Isabel's Family, that exalted Family that had italicized its gentility until it *almost* forgot properly to emphasize its money. Isabel, slightly annoyed because at twenty-five, in spite of her own beauty and that Family's gentility and affluence, she was still Miss Mason, had taken Greeley's advice to herself and gone West.

Six weeks of propinquity under the languorous sun and glamorous moon of Southern California, and Isabel had notified the Family that she was minded to become Mrs. Dean Halfday. The Family had signaled deep interest, some doubt, and a desire to analyze the candidate under their own delicate, but searching microscope.

Hence the first term of the problem—Halfday had come to New York to meet Isabel's family. All of which is bad art and misleading, because this isn't about Isabel's family at all. But it's how it came about that on this particular evening, some chance having engaged Isabel elsewhere, Halfday, the Californian, was dining at the Claridge with Jim Fellowes.

Fellowes fancied himself in the rôle of Broadwayite—he lived in Brooklyn—and liked to dine out-of-towners—particularly Californians—at the Claridge. He had an idea that its black and gold and crystal as background for the beauties of stage and screen was

just the dazzling place to take Californians. He was laying himself out to entertain Halfday as the fiancé of Isabel of the Family Nason, and Halfday was indeed amused by the thumbnail biographies of these most chic ladies of ravishing shoulders, amazing coiffures, and, alas, sometimes quite commonplace features.

"Now, there!" said Mr. Fellowes. "There's an interesting girl! Don't look now! In a minute look over at the second table from the pillar at your left. That's Adele, Limited."

"What!" said Halfday, and then, "Oh, one of those dressmakers, eh?"

"Dressmaker, huh! Nothing of the sort! A modiste, a designer of costumes, a gown builder, a dress shark!"

"I apologize," said Halfday.

"Haven't you noticed all those delicious names on the Avenue—Cecile, Hats; and Marguerite, Lingerie; and Juliet, Gowns; and Madeline, Inc.; and Theresa and Rosalie and Estelle and Helene and Antoinette! Oh, yum-yum!" He smacked his lips.

"Sweet names of women," smiled Halfday. "I used to know an Adele myself. Is the coast clear? May I look now?"

"All's well."

Halfday looked. Sometimes one who goes whistling carelessly through a wood comes out suddenly upon a lake, a dell, a vista of waterfall and hilltop whose poignant loveliness seems to

reach in to some great quietness behind his babbling senses; sometimes he who has sailed many seas thus feels his soul as he pauses at the cottage door behind which he hears his mother's step.

It was she! That very Adele he used to know. Changed mightily, it is true—perhaps if it had not been for that identifying "Adele," he *might* have felt merely haunted by some lovely, puzzling ghost. Changed! He felt somehow glad that her hair remained the same silken duskiness and had not taken on any of the marvelous shades from yellow to magenta that surrounded her. He remembered her as a slender, supple girl in a plain little dark-blue dress, high necked and long sleeved; now he knew he was beholding a masterpiece of her art, concocted of luscious velvets, cloudlike chiffons, moonlight tracteries, after some bewildering design that left bare her wonderful shoulders and arms.

"Quite some Adele," murmured Fellowes appreciatively.

Halfday nodded. Appearances would indicate that the bud had bloomed into the hothouse rose of commerce, perfectly petaled, wonderfully colored—and probably fragrantless. He pulled his gaze from her cool, clear profile.

"Married, I suppose," he suggested lightly. "Husband with her?"

"No, that's Eddie Greenberg, the petticoat king. Funny she doesn't marry some of these fellows that get crazy about her. Always got some affair on, they tell me. But she never lets them interfere with business." Fellowes chuckled. "Last year young Herriott—yes, *the* Herriott's son—fell so hard for Adele that his family almost tore up Fifth Avenue breaking it off. His sister—she married the earl of something or other, you know—had most of her trousseau designed by Adele, and one day she thoughtlessly took little brother to one of her interviews with the fair designer. He certainly laid a

siege, while the family threw all the kinds of fits there are!"

"But she didn't take him?"

"No. Oh, she makes plenty of money, and her head's pretty level, they say. He was just a kid, anyway—twenty-four or so—and she's twenty-eight or nine, anyway."

"About that," said Halfday, and added quickly, "probably."

The entrance of a Follies chorus girl, whose bizarre makeup brought her the spotlight she craved, distracted Fellowes' attention from Adele. When, presently, he and Halfday rose to go, Adele and Eddie, the handsome petticoat king, were just rising, too. Halfday passed close, and she lifted a casual glance to his face.

He had wanted to see if those eyes had changed to match her present self. They had—they were cool, veiled, indifferent. And then, as his held them, something happened in them, something shy and startled, like a fawn springing from a copse; something warm and inviting, like the open fire a traveler glimpses through some half-drawn curtain as he passes in the rain—*recognition*.

Halfday bowed, so slight a bow, however, that it might have been merely a courteous inclination of the head in passing. He did not pause; she did not speak.

Hours later, as he switched off the lights and opened the windows, he was thinking, half smilingly, of Adele. Oh, not this one he had seen to-night—a slender, supple girl standing in the doorway of a tiny, dim room. And just across the three-foot hall, on the threshold of just such another tiny, dim room, *he* stood—"in the brave days when we were twenty-one."

Upstairs, Sanderson's violin was singing the wistfully passionate strains of Musetta's waltz song; from down the hall came the clickity-click-clicking-siff of McAllister's typewriter;

the night-muffled noises of the city drifted in to them as they were drifting in to him now. So they stood there, he and Adele; Adele, eighteen years old, with deep, cool eyes and pale, cool cheeks and warm, sweet lips, who worked in a milliner's shop and daily experimented on madame with French out of a little red book; Adele, whose body was like a wood nymph's and who reminded him of apple blossoms;

one ever have vague ideas of heaven after that!

And then that blasted blunderbuss Detmold, slamming the street door and banging up the stairs, bawling out some puerile ditty—



"Married, I suppose," suggested Halfday lightly. "Husband with her?"
 "No, that's Eddie Greenberg, the petticoat king."

Adele, who advised him gravely about his Career and drank mischievously to the capital C in the amazing red wine of Papa Hertmann's forty-cent dinners.

"Good night," breathed Adele from her doorway, and "Good night," Half-day whispered from his. There was a pause—and then—how did it happen? He stepped across the tiny hall and his eager arms enfolded the girl like an armful of roses; he saw her eyes, shy and startled like a fawn springing from a copse, warm and alluring like— His eager boy's mouth pressed her fresh lips—Adele's lips! Why should

Two doors closed with soft naste, and in one of the little rooms a big boy drew a long breath and felt his heart pounding merrily against his ribs and reached out a hand that wasn't just steady for his little brown pipe on the littered table. And in the other little room— Ah, what did Adele do? He had wondered. In the morning had come the telegram: "Come home. Father died last night."

And he had gone home—'way home to California—and been the head of the family and had watched the orange groves grow and had tried to do the

right thing by mother and the girls. And he had forgotten all about the Career. He had sent a little note to Adele that began, "My dear friend," and had said he was sorry he had been obliged to leave so suddenly, and he hoped she was getting on fine, and had Mack sold any plays, and how was Sandy coming—and so on— And she had replied in kind, a shy, stilted little letter that hoped he was well, and maybe he'd be coming to New York again some time, and she had dined with Sandy at Papa Hertmann's the other night—and so on. At Christmas, he had sent a card, but he hadn't heard from her. He had been very busy and time had passed quickly. Sometimes, when he had been watching the smudge pots on a frosty night, he'd dreamed a little. But she had faded into the symbol of the romance of youth, a sweet, dim ghost of the "twenty-one" days; that vision of the might-have-been that a man sees when he sits alone by a dying fire, that a man's thinking of when his wife says: "John! Good heavens, I've asked you *four* times if you 'phoned the Smiths yesterday!"

He got to be thirty, thirty-one. A man really ought to marry. The girls were all married but Mildred, and they were always matchmakingly introducing him to "the sweetest girl" or the "jolliest girl" or "the darlinest girl." A man *ought* to marry. And then had come Isabel, blond, poised, patrician, charming, a wife any man might be proud of—and a man might as well get married.

When Halfday arose the next morning, he asked himself why on earth he had acted as he had last night. Why had he not spoken to his old friend? Surely it would have been the most natural thing in the world to say, "Don't you remember me?" Besides, he had seen that she did remember him, and he had not given her a chance for a how-do-you-do! Was he afraid of Ed-

die, the petticoat king? And what was the secret that prevented his exclaiming to Fellowes:

"Why, that's the Adele I used to know!"

He was to have luncheon with Isabel at one, and his morning was free. He called a taxi and was presently set down before plateglass windows upon which appeared in golden letters: "Adele, Ltd."

In a rose-and-ivory bower an exquisitely coiffed and corseted young woman, gowned so smartly that she should have been exhibited on a pedestal as a sample of the wonders worked by her chief, inquired in what way she could serve him.

Would she be so kind as to present this card to—ah—to Miss Oakley?

In what seemed to be her office—a cross between a boudoir and a directors' room—Adele stood by a business-like-looking desk, his card in her hand.

"How do you do?"

She put out her hand with a man's directness. Its clasp was firm and friendly as a man's, too. Her smile was most friendly, and in her eyes there were no fawns or fires; they were simply calm, straight-gazing, *beautiful* eyes.

"Sit down." She sat in her desk chair; he sat in the one she indicated, which was placed as the doctor puts his patient. "So you did know me last night."

He admitted it; thought he would try to explain his behavior, and then thought he wouldn't.

"And by that, you knew me, too."

"You haven't changed so much," she said.

"You have," he said.

"Have I? Well, it's been—a long time, Mr. Halfday."

"You *have* changed. You used to call me Dean, didn't you?" Now what was the use in saying that?

"Did I?"

"You did, Adele."

She laughed a little.

"Well—we were children." She did not speak his name, and she went on in the stock phrasing of friendly reunion. "Everything has gone well with you, I see."

"Am I such a picture of stolid prosperity?"

"I didn't intimate that 'stolid,' and you don't mind looking prosperous, do you?"

"Oh, no, but you make me feel that I have missed so much in that commonplace prosperity. Now you have attained fame so romantically——"

"I?" She gave a little incredulous laugh. "You must certainly define romance with a difference."

"Don't tell me you haven't felt it!" he protested. "Why, here you were, less than a dozen years ago, just a pretty little girl in a milliner's—old Madam What-was-her-name?—and today you're a celebrity pointed out on Broadway to wide-eyed Westerners! Think of the ambition, the steadfastness, the shrewdness, the *genius* that enabled that penniless little girl to become the great lady I am talking to now. And you don't call that romance! I can imagine what a story David Graham Phillips could have written about you. Why didn't McAllister put you in a play?"

She listened, smiling.

"I hadn't thought of it that way. I've been too busy, I guess. I've worked hard, and schemed and contrived all the romance out of me, I think sometimes. And then I've played hard, too, maybe at games that weren't specially worth playing." She hurried the last of it, as if she found herself saying things she hadn't quite intended. "And you've been in California all this time?"

"Yes. Growing oranges."

"Now *that* sounds romantic to me," she asserted. "Sunshine and the out-of-doors and yellow oranges!"

"The romance is always in the other fellow's job," Halfday surmised.

He asked about Sanderson and McAllister and the others, and presently they were deep in recollections of old mischiefs and pleasures, those "old days" whose poverty and cares and heartaches time had faded to a hue that from this distance looked uniformly rosy.

Halfday could see that Adele in this Adele as the shape of the bud can still be discerned in the rose, but he could not make them the same. This woman was so different from the women he knew; the type of big-business woman in a big city was strange to him—independent, efficient, worldly wise, all her forces so carefully marshaled and conserved, her real self intrenched in some inner fortress from which it seemed only very seldom to peer forth.

After a little, from all these telephone calls, discreet knocks, apologetic inquiries from the feminine majordomo who had admitted him—and whose name was Stella—he began to guess that he might be taking the time of a busy woman.

"Well, I see I must go. I'm an idler, but you're not."

She rose, too.

"You're going to be here a while?"

"A few weeks."

"Then perhaps I shall see you again."

She dropped back into her first formality.

"Why, of course!" he cried. "Surely you can give me one evening."

She looked at him gravely, a straight-in-the-eyes gaze.

"Yes—if you—— Your wife isn't with you?" She smiled with that.

"I haven't any wife, Adele."

No tremendous relief showed in her.

"No? All right, then—some evening."

"Wouldn't you have dined with—myself and wife?"

The smile deepened.

"Oh, yes—if *madame* had insisted."

"Without *madame*?"

"Perhaps—*once*." A dimple showed at the corner of her mouth. He had forgotten that dimple—almost! He had used to watch for it—that rare dimple that showed only when she was indulging in some little secret whimsicality. It had always been his cue to ask what she was thinking of, what she meant beyond what she said, why she was laughing at him.

He began to speak with the old boyish eagerness—and there was the majordomo tapping discreetly. He put out his hand.

"Well, good-by. I speak for that evening. I'll—'phone you, if I may."



He stepped across the tiny hall and his eager arms enfolded the girl like an armful of roses. His eager boy's mouth pressed her fresh lips—Adele's lips!

"All right." Her hand was in his. "Good-by."

He had walked blocks down the Avenue, buoyant with a what-a-glorious-world-this-is feeling, before he began to *think* again. How could he dine with Adele—without Isabel? Why try? Why not a little party—his fiancée, his old friend? Of course, his fiancée would be delighted to meet his old friend. He grinned. It would be a ghastly affair, even if it could be arranged. And a man would be absolutely mad to arrange it.

Suddenly his amusement and his good feeling left him. He did not ask himself any direct questions, but he began to wonder why he had not frankly told Adele his business in New York. There was no reason why he should not have said simply: "I am here to meet my fiancée's illustrious family."

At luncheon Isabel began archly and ended sulkily, at least one would have called it sulkiness in a less patrician person. He did not ask her any questions, but she asked him what made him so absent-minded. Isabel was just a trifle too tall, too blond, too *finished*. She seemed to fit only under crystal lights—not under the stars. You would never fancy her lying on your blanket by a golden campfire—not, of course, that you fancied any one in that intimate position.

"I believe you're getting tired of New York," Isabel accused him.

"I don't know why you say that," said Halfday. "I'm getting more and more interested every day. It's a wonderfully fascinating city."

"I'm glad you find it so," said Isabel. "You know I shall want to spend a great deal of time here. Your old West is delightful to dream away a few months in, but here is *life*."

"That depends on what you call life," he demurred lazily.

"It's where everything happens," Isabel went on bromidically. "You feel

in the *middle* of things. The big things are done here—the people who do big things all come here—the writers, artists, actors, musicians—"

"And dressmakers," said Halfday.

Isabel raised her eyebrows.

"Dressmakers! Certainly. But that's a horrid Western word. A *modiste* is an artist, of course. One doesn't wear dresses, dear man; one wears frocks, gowns, designed by a *modiste*."

"All the artists," smiled Halfday. "And the greatest of these is the *modiste*."

"You have surprised my secret," laughed Isabel. "The secret of New York's charm for every woman—clothes. That's why we are all mad about New York—clothes! To see them, to buy them, to wear them!"

"Clothes are all very well," he agreed, "in their place. But clothes as the business of life—It seems rather futile, doesn't it? Of course, making them as a business, that's different. But wearing them as a business!" He made a little gesture.

Isabel looked at him.

"Have you a brief for the clothing business? Or are you jealous of my new frocks?"

Her look and the word pricked him. She rather expected him to be *jealous*. He assured her a little too positively that she need not be alarmed. Then he went on talking about clothes—smart gowns and their designers. Isabel remarked his novel interest in the subject.

For several days he was inclined to be strangely moody. Even Isabel observed his queer behavior. He said he must have caught cold.

One afternoon he telephoned from downtown that he had met an old friend—would she mind if he dined out? Isabel gave her permission. She was not exacting, which was well, she herself reflected, as her lover was obviously not of the ardent sort.

Halfday did not think he was behaving well. Being a mere man, he was careful not to analyze his conduct. He did not even rebuke his soaring spirits as he found a number in the telephone directory—Plaza 8696.

A brisk voice informed him that he was connected with the establishment of Adele, Ltd. And then, after a moment, another voice—a throaty, velvety, Barrymore-ish voice—said, "Yes?"

He leaned closer to the telephone.

"Adele?"

"Yes."

"This is Dean—Dean Halfday."

"Yes," noncommittally.

"Is that all?" reproachfully. "Just 'yes'."

She laughed.

"Good morning."

"Are you very busy this morning?"

"Very."

"But you can spare me a moment?"

"You are taking it." There was, however, a sort of leisurely little drawl in her low tones.

"Have you a great many engagements for this evening?"

"Oh—not a *great* many."

"Any that you can't break?"

"That depends."

"Won't you dine with me, *please*?"

She seemed to hesitate.

"Why—you really wish it?"

"Of course!"

"Then—yes, I will." There was a resolute intonation in the words that he did not quite understand.

"Good!" he cried. "A thousand thanks. And do you know what I'd like?"

"What?"

"Probably you don't possess such a thing now."

"You're making me curious," she said.

"A sort of a plain little—dark blue dress!"

He was surprised that his heart should leap at those words. There was

a tiny pause. How he longed to see her face!

Then she said: "You mean you want me to wear a—blue dress?"

"Will you?"

"It seems a small request," she drawled coolly.

"You have one?" he asked eagerly.

"Oh, yes."

"You used to wear a blue dress so much," he said.

"Did I?"

"Don't you remember?"

"I think it was probably the only one I had." Her voice was so well controlled, so noncommittal, and yet he could not tell whether there was something in it that quickened his pulse or whether it was just his own vision of—that blue dress.

When her wrap slipped off in his hands that night, he saw with an emotion he did not dissect that she wore a dark-blue gown. It was a very different thing, yet the effect to his masculine eyes was exactly the same—that is, enchanting; it was so simple and so chaste and showed you so delicately the little and perfect body it clothed. That other dark-blue dress had been a crude, sacklike little thing—comparatively; this was a work of art. Half-day soon began to feel this and that it symbolized a like subtle difference in the girl and the woman.

"Thank you," he smiled.

"You like it?"

"It's charming."

They let it go thus with a careful casualness, and for a while talked the usual commonplaces.

Half-day's attention was fixed with an absolute content upon Adele. She seemed to exhale a wonderful vitality that he felt as one smells the perfume of flowers, yet she was not vivacious. She did not laugh much; she did not talk fast—often, indeed, with that curious little drawl.

It is generally after the real busi-

ness of dining is over that the conversation becomes interesting—if it is to be so.

"I suppose now," Halfday began over the dessert, "that you could not exist—or, rather, would call it *only* existing—outside New York."

"I wonder," she mused. "So many people say that. Sometimes I wonder, when I am tired of noise and hurry and—clothes and—women, if it's true that the mark of the city is on me so."

"You don't always think of it as irresistible, then?"

"Oh, no. Once I was ill and had a real vacation—I haven't had many. It was up in the mountains. At night I used to lie on a blanket by the camp fire. The stars were so close and bright— It was so quiet—so quiet—" Her eyes closed.

Halfday sat quite still. Something was wrong with him, something had taken hold of his heart and stopped his breath—for a second.

"It's great, isn't it?" he said naturally. "And—what did you think of—there under the stars by the camp fire?"

"Oh—I didn't think." Some guard had suddenly come on duty.

"Of course not," he said. "You just dream that it's all come true."

"You must have lain by camp fires, too," she said.

"By many camp fires. Tell me, how many dreams did you dream?"

"Only one."

"What was that one dream?"

The guard advanced to challenge.

"Now, why, gentleman from California, should I tell you my one dream?"

"For old times' sake."

"Times is changed, says the dogs'-meat man.' Besides, I never told you any dreams then, did I?"

"No, I guess I did all the talking—about what a great man I was going to be—and you egged me on."



"You are really old friends? How delightful! Madame and I are about to discuss a gown. Will you be interested?" "Deeply," asserted Mr. Halfday.

"You seem to have turned out a fairly good article," she mocked.

"Thank you." He bowed. "And look what you've turned out! Did you go to do it or did it just happen?"

"Oh—I had to have a little taste of life, so I decided I'd better get it myself. I just hung on until—things came my way."

She told him a little—shreds—of how the girl in the millinery shop came to be a Fifth Avenue "Ltd."! She laughed about that "Adele, Ltd." Miss A. Oakley, she said, was an impenetrable incognita.

Then suddenly the whole evening was gone—one of those wholly satisfying evenings that leave you wholly unsatisfied.

She let him come—for just a mo-

ment, she said—into the charming Park Avenue apartment that so evidently reflected her. She took off her hat. He remembered the way her hair grew there on the back of her neck, that little dark tendril on the milkiness of her skin— And the blue dress— Was that the elevator or the click of Mack's typewriter? He took her in his arms and kissed her.

Halfday, being mere man, had taken some careless kisses between that kiss and this, perhaps hoping to find one as sweet, and had never found it—until now.

No thought of Isabel could have intruded upon the glory of this kiss. For just a moment the woman in his arms yielded to him, seemed to listen to his "I love you, I love you! I can see now

that it has always been *you*—back of all my dreams. *You, Adele, you!*"

She freed herself.

"Please go," she whispered.

"Adele! Don't you remember that other night? Let me tell you——"

The sound of his own words restrained him. He had not been going to tell her about Isabel. At last he remembered *her*, and the thought of her was like an icy plunge. He seized his coat and hat.

"Good night," he stammered. "Forgive me! I—to-morrow—— Good night——"

She did not answer. He rushed out.

He walked himself past the intoxication of Adele to the cold contemplation of Isabel. What he marveled at was how he had drifted through all these years thinking the recurring image of Adele a mere young ghost of joy; how he could have become so old and remained so ignorant of love as to drift on into such an engagement as his was with Isabel. He was surely afloat in a sea of trouble. And yet what he was chiefly concerned about, when he finally reached home after hours of wandering, was whether Adele understood why he had wished her to wear that blue gown.

At seven o'clock in the morning, he reached for his telephone. There was a struggle which the operator was just ending with "They don't answer," when a low, lazy voice said: "Well?" It seemed right in his ear. He did not dare picture her!

"Adele—dear!—how are you this morning?"

"O-oh—sleepy," drawled the voice, not at all agitated—a little amused?—just a mite tender?

"Listen, dear, I *must* see you—at once——"

"Impossible," she murmured.

"There's something I must tell you—I should have told you at first. I don't know why I didn't. Something

very serious." His tone was deadly serious indeed.

"Tell me now."

"I can't—over the 'phone. I must see you."

There was a pause.

"Perhaps I don't want to know it," she said.

"I wish to Heaven it weren't true!"

He was terribly in earnest. "But I've got to tell you—because—because I love you."

No answer. He listened eagerly. Not a sound.

"Adele, did you hear?"

"Yes."

"I can't ask you to—if you could care," he went on miserably, "until I—because I've got to tell you——" He broke off.

"About Isabel?" said the velvety voice coolly.

He started as if the telephone had put out a tongue at him. He opened his mouth, swallowed hard, then:

"*You knew!*"

"It was very simple," she said. "I read it in the paper: 'Mr. Dean Stanton Halfday is here from California visiting the family of his fiancée, Miss Isabel Nason.'"

He cursed himself for being all the varieties and quantities of fools in the calendar. He finally got out gloomily:

"You hate me, of course."

"Of course," she agreed sweetly.

He groaned.

"If I could make you understand! But I didn't understand myself——"

"Good-by," said Adele. "I shall be late at the shop. I've an appointment this morning with Miss Nason. She wants me to design a gown for her. Good-by."

"Adele!" he cried frantically.

But she was gone.

He bathed, dressed, breakfasted, in an inferno of regrets. He had only one thing to be thankful for—that he was not a *house guest* at the Nasons'.

Isabel telephoned to him. Let's see—they were to lunch together, weren't they? Well, she had an appointment with a modiste this morning. Would he care to meet her about—say eleven o'clock? He would be delighted. All right, then, Adele's—Fifty-eighth Street— What was the matter with his voice? Well, it sounded queer. Did he enjoy his vacation dinner last night? Oh, very much indeed. Adele's, then, at eleven.

The idea did not strike him as in the least amusing. In fact, no idea could get past his obsession to see Adele again at once. In a few moments he was at her door; in a few more in her presence.

She did not, at first, look the nonchalance her voice had conveyed over the telephone.

"What is the use of this?" She did not meet his eyes.

"I want to tell you—to explain——" She made a tired little gesture.

"Oh—it's all explained, isn't it? I knew before you came that day."

"Yet you went with me. Why?"

"Oh—I wanted to. I waited for you to tell me, and you didn't. Well, you can console yourself that I knew and wasn't being deceived."

"It consoles me very little," he said grimly. "When I came to see you that day, I came with a perfectly unsuspecting friendliness. I went away—loving you. I know now that it has always been you. I think I've always been so wholly yours that I've never even thought about love. Does that seem absurd? And yet that's really why I became engaged to Isabel—I thought I might as well be married!"

"Shall I believe that?" She shook her head, smiling a little.

"I suppose you won't, but it's true. Adele, did you understand about the blue dress?"

"I understand about all dresses—it is my business."

"We were standing in our doorways. Sandy was playing upstairs. Mack was typing on that old thrasher of his. You had on a little blue dress. You always made me think of apple blossoms——"

"Stop!" she commanded.

"You don't remember?" he pleaded.

"No."

"You're afraid!" he cried, tenderly triumphant. "That's a good sign for me! It makes me happy!"

"Do you think you should be making love to me when you are engaged to Isabel?" she asked reproachfully.

"I'm not *making* love to you—I'm loving you. Last night——"

"I shall ring for Stella," said Adele firmly.

Stella at that moment rapped on the door.

"Miss Nason is here, madam."

"Have Miss Nason come in," said madam in her business voice.

Isabel immediately appeared in the doorway. Her haughty little chin went up as she glimpsed a man. How dare this creature have her men about——

"Good morning, Miss Nason," said the creature. "May I present an old friend of mine? Mr. Halfday."

Isabel almost gasped.

"Why, Dean! I said eleven!"

It was a presumptuous jest on Adele's part, she thought. She looked sharply at Halfday. He muttered something. Halfday was not a good actor. Isabel's glance flew to the jester. Adele's eyes were bright, her cheeks burned, her breath came quickly—and what had she said? "An old friend of *mine*!"

Isabel's brain, as the French say, was furnished.

"You are really old friends? How delightful! Madame and I are about to discuss a gown. Will you be interested?"

"Deeply," asserted Mr. Halfday.

He was, indeed, quite piercingly interested. Had he been more of a

philosopher or a philanderer, he would have found more humor in the situation. Rather suspended between terror and admiration, he watched them and caught words like velvet—crêpe, chiffon, lace, tulle, corsage, silver, panne, paillettes, décolleté, and so forth, in bewildering combinations.

He could analyze Isabel—handsome, cool, patrician, likable, wise—but when he looked at Adele, schedules were impossible—emotion merely sighed a great "Ah!"

The conference seemed to proceed to an amicable conclusion and the ladies arose.

"Very well, I will decide and let you know," said Isabel. "Are you coming, Dean?" She moved toward the door without referring to that old friendship.

Halfday followed her, but he looked at Adele, and plain on his face was the misery of the man who fears the woman he loves will not understand that he must go with the other woman. His eyes said:

"It kills me to leave you like this! I adore you, and I'm dying to kiss you! But you see how it is!"

Isabel read that shockingly indiscreet message like print. She glanced at Adele, who was perfectly masked and not even looking at Halfday. If there was any expression at all on her lovely face, it was the merest ghost of *laughter*. Isabel was quite aware that the woman who still hugs her sense of humor is the woman who beholds victory perching on her banners.

"Good morning." Isabel nodded sweetly from the doorway.

"Good-by, Adele," said Halfday, hand on the doorknob. He would not deny himself the luxury of that "Adele."

"Good-by." Adele's gracious inclination of the head included them both.

The moment the limousine door closed upon the gentleman from California, the session opened, with "Old

friends, eh?" Isabel did not stoop to storm and she was not madly in love with Halfday, but she was a woman and she had regarded him as her property. She asked a few quite calm and quite pointed questions, to which Mr. Halfday replied truthfully and with what reluctance he could muster.

The taxi driver who saw his lifted finger a half hour later was surprised to see the gentleman apparently juggling an expensive ring that looked like a lady's. The juggler gave the address of a well-known modiste and said bother the speed laws.

Stella looked "What? Again!" and ushered him, with something like a third cousin to excitement, into the Presence.

Adele was examining a French fashionplate. She looked up quizzically.

"So soon?" she murmured.

"I couldn't really tell you how it happened," explained the radiant Halfday, "but it's done!"

Adele did not ask what. She merely retired behind the barricade of a chair.

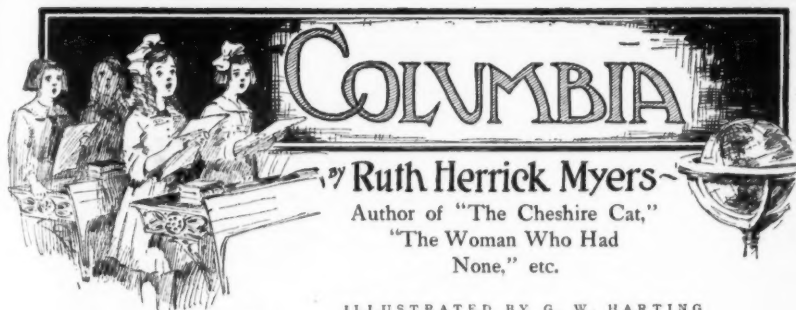
"These frequent calls in business hours, Mr. Halfday——" she began a little breathlessly.

"Adele, I know a camp where the stars come close like a ceiling and the fire burns in golden flames. I want to be there—with you. It's there I want you to tell me what that one dream was——"

"You're quite mad!" sighed Adele.

"Now, there's Stella," said Halfday advancing. "Don't you suppose Stella would like a nice shop? Because *Mrs. Halfday*——"

It came to him in a flash that he was giving away a wonderful thing very lightly—a thing into which had gone the youth, the hope, the brain and heart and toil, of the most wonderful woman in the world. He looked at her humbly, and saw in her eyes that it had all been just a substitute for the one dream that had come true.



ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

A touching story of Patriotism and Young America.

THE fitful April sunshine, looking strangely bright in this month of cold and spring gloom and strange events, burst forth for a moment upon the two little girls zigzagging along the wet sidewalk.

"My brother Tom," boasted Katherine, swinging her school umbrella around and around by its long-suffering tassel, "says the funniest things! He'll sit for a long time thinking and then he'll say something so perfectly killing that every one nearly dies laughing."

"Ernest says funny things like that without thinking," Alice returned, tossing her head.

"Tom has a new girl," pursued Tom's adoring small sister. "Um, but she's pretty! She has the most wonderful hair! I shouldn't wonder a bit if he would marry this one."

"Ernest would never marry any girl as long as he has me to take care of," Ernest's sister declared proudly. "Or if he does, I'm to live with him instead of with Aunt Ida and Uncle Fred."

Katherine, not being able to match this sacrifice of brotherly love, was silent.

But there came a morning a few days later when she scored for brother Tom.

"What do you think?" she announced, as Alice joined her at their corner on the way to school. "Tom's

enlisted. He's going on a submarine chaser. That's just about as dangerous a thing as you can enlist on, and mother says she hopes just one thing—that if they shoot, they'll shoot to kill. Has Ernest enlisted?"

"Not yet," admitted Alice, with a curious sinking at her heart. For the atmosphere at home—that is to say, at Aunt Ida's—was not as patriotic as might have been desired. "But he will, of course," she added hurriedly, "if his country needs him."

Ernest, her adored Ernest, had never been found wanting in time of need.

When they sang "America" again at school that day, she sang with such a fervor of enthusiasm that it made her throat ache. But who would not try to equal at least the fiery patriotism that was pouring forth from Katherine's young cast-iron lungs? She was singing for Tom, as Alice well knew, her face crimson with effort at attaining high E:

"Long may our land be bright
With Freedom's holy light—"

Even after teacher's bell tapped and they sat down breathless, the thrill of the spirit remained and the tune sang on and on in a small brain that vainly tried to apply itself to the consecutive march of arithmetic, spelling, and read-

ing which followed music in the order of afternoon study.

Alice was still singing it lustily at six o'clock while she was helping Aunt Ida finish up dinner out in the kitchen, accenting each beat with a punch of the potato masher down into the kettleful of fluffy potato, when Ernest walked in.

"Hello, Columbia!" he greeted her.

Alice giggled and stopped singing.

"Don't call me 'Columbia,'" she protested, and turned her head so that Ernest wouldn't see that she was still laughing at him.

"All right, Columbia, just as you say," agreed Ernest cheerfully, and he ran his finger down her spine as he passed her so that she squealed and squirmed and protested again, thinking him secretly quite the wittiest brother who ever teased a small sister.

"Tom Parker's enlisted," she reported importantly as they all sat down to dinner.

"Yes, he told me," Ernest answered, looking suddenly serious. "So have Carson Smith and John Holliday and a couple of fellows down at the office."

"Well," predicted Aunt Ida scornfully, "they'll soon find out how much fun it is!"

"I should say yes," agreed Uncle Fred, attacking a juicy porterhouse. "This business of fighting other people's battles for them certainly wouldn't appeal to me. They have no right, anyhow, to send our American boys over into those French trenches. It's just a war of the big interests from start to finish."

Alice looked at Ernest rather anxiously to see if he were going to argue this, but was not surprised when he remained silent, a slight compression around his lips. They had both learned long ago the futility of argument with Aunt Ida and Uncle Fred.

"I hope, Ernest," continued Uncle Fred, "that you'll have sense enough to keep out of it."

"Especially," Aunt Ida added, "as you have your sister dependent upon you."

"They may conscript me," Ernest said mildly.

Aunt Ida immediately grew indignant.

"Well, I guess they won't," she expostulated, "unless you misinform them! You aren't twenty yet. They won't conscript boys of nineteen for a while yet."

All things considered, Alice was glad when the subject finally shifted.

"Is it just a war of the big interests, Ernest?" she asked him after dinner.

They were alone down in the basement, where he was wrestling with a nail she had asked him to take out of her shoe and she was sitting on her stockinged foot on the workbench beside him.

"Why, I'd hate to think so, Columbia," Ernest replied thoughtfully.

Columbia pouted a little.

"What makes you call me that?"

"Columbia? It's a mark of esteem, sis. You're the only patriotic thing around the house, and therefore you're so refreshing that you deserve to be labeled."

Eleven-year-old Columbia reflected on this explanation a moment.

"Do you really like to have me patriotic?" she inquired seriously.

"I wouldn't give a snap for you unless you were," he growled, giving a savage pull at the nail with a pair of tweezers. "They make me sick!" he added under his breath, glancing upstairs.

"Didn't we have an uncle or something in the Civil War?"

"Yes, Uncle Will, Uncle Fred's brother. He was at Bull Run and Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain and in dozens of scraps. Gee, those were the days! And I'll bet Grandma Lyons didn't raise any howl, either,



"Columbia? It's a mark of esteem, sis. You're the only patriotic thing around the house, and you deserve to be labeled."

when Uncle Will went. She was some patriot, that woman was!"

Ernest gestured with Alice's shoe as he warmed to his subject.

"Why, sis, you know that old cherry chest of drawers with the glass knobs that was grandma's? Yes, the one up in Aunt Ida's room. Well, that whole big top drawer grandma used to have full of Uncle Will's soldier things—the cap he had on when he was shot, with the bullet hole through it, and buttons from his coat, and cartridges, and old letters, and his knapsack packed just as he left it. And when I was a kid about seven years old, she used to set me in a chair and tell me about him and how all the people in town turned out when they brought his body home, and decorated the cemetery with flags

and flowers. She used to get so excited over it, and even when the tears were rolling down her cheeks, I can remember how her eyes snapped. Gee, you ought to have seen her! And Uncle Will was only sixteen when he enlisted. And proud! Gee, she was proud of that!"

Ernest reached for his tweezers again.

"Yellow!" he exclaimed. "Just as yellow as they can be!"

A sudden thought occurred to eleven-year-old Columbia.

"Am I the only reason you don't en-

list?" she quavered. "Do you want to go?"

"Want to!" Ernest gave a short laugh. "I'm just sick to go! They were after me, you know, a month ago, to join that radio corps that Carson Smith's just joined. And his wireless isn't half as complete as mine."

A very dark cloud hovered over little Columbia. It seemed to her suddenly a monstrous thing that she should be standing in the way of her worshiped brother when the glories of war called him. Why, she wondered, had fate orphaned the two of them while she was still a baby and Ernest still such a small boy that Uncle Fred and Aunt Ida had had reluctantly to shoulder the responsibility of their rearing? Perhaps, to do Aunt Ida justice, she did not realize how plain she had made that reluctance. She would probably have justified herself by explaining that she was trying always to impress upon Ernest the fact that he was his sister's natural guardian. Responsibility, she figured, was good for a boy. But the shadow of the situation fell very heavily just now upon a small, eleven-year-old girl, as she dismally watched her brother put away his tools and shut down the lid of the box. Very slowly, she drew on her shoe and laced it with long, thoughtful pulls at the shoe strings.

A new poster had appeared overnight at the corner of the school yard. A woman, her face lit with patriotism, was leading a youth up to Uncle Sam and saying: "Here he is, sir. We need him and you, too."

Columbia, skipping along to school with her perfectly new jumping rope, saying, "Yes, no, yes, no——" missed on "yes" abruptly in the short stop she made as she came face to face with the poster and suddenly caught its significance.

Was the woman the young man's wife or sister or mother? Columbia

could not settle that question satisfactorily to herself. But the curious thing was that it made no difference. Whether she were wife, mother, or sister, would her words not have fitted the situation?

"We need him and you, too."

A great light flooded down over the perplexity in Columbia's soul exactly as the radiant April sunshine occasionally flashed away the gloom of this exceptionally dismal month. What was her need of Ernest as compared to her country's? He ought to go. Of course he ought to go. Uncle Will had gone. Grandma Lyons had been proud to kiss him good-by. She, Columbia—and she gloried in her new name, now—could live her own life even if she were left alone and brotherless. Ernest should go.

Take it all in all, it was a thrilling day from morning to night. Katherine was raving, for one thing, about Tom before school and at recess. It was Tommy this and Tommy that. It was Tom's uniform and Tom's bravery and Tom's drilling and Tom, Tom, Tom, until Columbia was almost frantic.

"Ernest will probably enlist in the radio corps," she told Katherine. "If you can do any sort of specialized work like that, Ernest says your chances for promotion are lots better. He does perfectly wonderful work with his wireless, and when the government made all the boys take their instruments down, they asked Ernest to be one of their operators."

"It's not as dangerous as being on a submarine chaser," insisted Katherine. "Besides, he hasn't joined yet. Why didn't he enlist when they asked him to?"

"He's going to," declared Columbia, almost in tears.

Besides all these arguments with Katherine, which were agitating enough, there were special exercises at school in honor of the French Com-

mission, which had just arrived in Chicago. Patriotism was rampant. The children were dismissed forty-five minutes early and marshaled up to the assembly hall to listen to speeches in commemoration of the occasion and in order that their principal might explain to them the issues that had brought Marshal Joffre and former Premier Viviani to this country. They learned about Lafayette and they sang the "Marseillaise" and then "America" again, and they saluted the flag and cheered the French tricolors when the principal unrolled them and placed them side by side with the Stars and Stripes. What with the cheering and the excitement and her own personal conflicts, little Columbia was quite used up.

Not so much so, however, but what she found time and occasion to express her newly acquired sentiments that night to Ernest. She followed him out to Uncle Fred's garage and sat on a box while she pleaded with him.

"Ernest, I've been thinking all day about something."

"Some concentration, that!" commented Ernest.

"Please don't tease. It's about your enlisting. Won't you listen?"

"All right. Shoot!"

"Why am I dependent on you?" inquired Columbia in a very businesslike tone. "Didn't papa and mamma leave us enough money——"

"Oh, it's not a question of money," broke in Ernest rather tartly. "There's money enough. It's looking after the welfare and shouldering the responsibility of two children not her own that's always bitten Aunt Ida. And now that I'm grown up, she thinks I ought to finish the job of looking out for you."

Ernest was peering down into the depths of the engine for a nut he had dropped and spoke rather abstractedly.

"Well," spoke Columbia slowly and

very much aware of the seriousness of her decision, "I've decided that I'm old enough now to look after myself, Ernest. I don't need you any more. And I think it's your duty to enlist for your country."

Ernest forgot the lost nut and turned around to give an odd glance at the tragic little figure sitting on the box with her hands folded demurely in her lap.

"Poor little Columbia!" he said. "I was kind of rotten last night when I told you you were the only thing that kept me from going, wasn't I?"

"Well, I am," Columbia agreed pathetically. "And I don't want to be."

She looked very small indeed, sitting there alone on the box in the dim corner. She still wore her yellow curls falling around her shoulders, and her dresses were up to her knees.

"A nice time you'd have with Aunt Ida all alone!" observed Ernest.

"I'm as old," she reminded him, "as you were when papa and mamma died."

"Yes, but they died, remember. That made a little difference. You would be deserted and thrust upon her care by a runaway brother. No, sis. I've threshed the thing all out once."

"And you won't go?" cried Columbia, springing to her feet.

"Not yet."

"Please, Ernest, please!"

But Ernest had returned to his search with the trouble lamp down into the murky depths of the automobile. Columbia stood watching him for a minute and then turned slowly and went back into the house.

But Ernest had been more touched than his small sister had realized.

"Poor kid!" he kept saying to himself. And it occurred to him that he had not behaved very well the night before to bring her to such a decision as this.

"I've made her think she's in the way, or something, or that I wish I



"Vive la France!" shouted Columbia, waving her flag. "Vive Joffre! Vive l'Amerique! Vive everything! Hurrah!"

didn't have her to take care of. Shucks!"

And by the time he had found the nut and screwed it into its proper place again, he had thought out a scheme for making it up to her and patching everything up so that it would be all right, a very masculine notion for erasing hasty words from feminine hearts.

It was, however, a very successful proposition that he put up to the delighted Columbia. Would she like to go down with him in the morning and watch the parade and see Marshal Joffre and Monsieur Viviani?

Would she like to? Columbia was ecstatic with enthusiasm.

"I've just been crazy to see him,"

she told Ernest. "They told us all about him at school to-day, and about how Lafayette came over to help us in our hour of direst need, and how we were returning the service now, and everything. And, oh, Ernest, will you teach me to pronounce 'Vivy la France' and 'Vivy l'Americk' so that I can wave my flag and shout it to them when they go by? And can we stand on the sidewalk right close up, instead of in a window?"

"I guess so. I guess so. Well, I certainly wouldn't want you shouting 'Vivy l'Americk' that way. Sure! Anything you want," Ernest promised her.

And at least, afterward, it was some consolation to recall that those had been her own ideas.

For in the morning he gave her her own way about every detail, a proposition that stationed them eventually upon Michigan Boulevard, overlooking the lake, in the very first rank of on-lookers that thronged the sidewalk. Columbia chose for herself, in order to elevate her somewhat into a better view, one of the green tin boxes marked, "Help Keep the City Clean," upon which she stood eagerly awaiting the grand sights.

They both loved the excitement. And there were many who turned to look at the excited, adoring child, who so evidently considered her brother a volume of indisputable information on all known subjects, and the good-looking, clean young chap who was so rather exceptionally nice to a mere small sister.

It was, nevertheless, rather a hard morning for Ernest. The martial music, the patriotism, the waving flags, the call, the constant, stirring call to arms, crept into his blood. He envied passionately every jacky, every cavalryman, every soldier who wore the uniform and was free to fight for his flag and sign up for service. A dozen

times the resolution seized him to enlist, whether or no. Each time the recollection of his sister, of Aunt Ida's attitude, of his age—only nineteen—or of the parting words of his mother, who had intrusted the baby sister to his particular care, made him waver again. The great conflict wearied him, irritated him. How could a fellow know what was right to do?

Columbia's questions she deliberately pointed toward one unswerving course. Was she right or wrong about this thing?

"What kind of a uniform will you wear, Ernest? What do they wear in the radio corps? Will you be on horseback? Will you be on a ship?"

The crowd grew more dense, the shouting louder.

"They're coming! They're coming!" people began to shout.

Excitement grew frantic down in the next block. They could hear the cries, "Vive la France! Vive l'Amerique! Hurrah for America! Hurrah for France! Hurrah for Joffre! Hurrah for Viviani! Hurrah!"

And amid cheering, shouts, the thrilling stir of the "Marseillaise," the automobile that bore the great men rolled into view.

"Vive la France!" shouted Columbia, waving her flag and, thanks to Ernest's instruction, pronouncing her French much better than she had done the night before. "Vive Joffre! Vive l'Amerique! Vive everything! Hurrah!"

The automobile passed on. The tension slackened a little. A mounted policeman pranced along close to the curb to straighten the line which had pushed out into the street during the great moment of the hero's passing.

"Get back there! Back on the sidewalk!" he ordered, waving them all back with his club.

"I can't," wailed Columbia, from the eminence that she occupied now with

four or five others. "They're pushing from behind."

As the overflow surged back from the street, the crush grew thicker among the unfortunates on the sidewalk.

"Make them stop pushing me, Ernest!" she cried. "Oh, stop! Please stop! I'm falling!"

There was a scream. Some one began to swear. A dozen voices cried out to warn the officer, whose horse was prancing furiously about, his mouth frothing— And then it was all over, and Ernest found himself kneeling in the street over Columbia's little figure, which lay very still on the pavement with a line of red across the forehead.

An age passed in which the crowd surged back and forth around them and people talked in hushed voices and explained what had happened to others who pushed into the circle. Then there was the clang of a bell, an ambulance came up, and they lifted Columbia in onto the white bed.

She opened her eyes for a moment as Ernest and the surgeon bent over her, but she was bewildered.

"Vive la France!" she murmured. And then, "I've lost my flag."

"How serious is it?" asked Ernest in a low voice.

"She's almost gone," returned the surgeon.

Ernest heard himself uttering a loud protest.

"Not sis! Not little Columbia! For God's sake, can't you do something?"

She opened her eyes again, and this time she knew Ernest.

"Now you can go, can't you?" she said, gave a tiny sigh, smiled, and lay still.

Some one led Ernest to the end of the ambulance where he could look out onto the street and get a whiff of fresher air. He heard some one telling him to keep hold of himself, to hang on, and this he strove manfully to do. Back on Michigan Avenue he still heard the shouts of the crowd, the strains of "America." Then a splash of color across the street arrested his attention, and a loud report. They were passing a recruiting station, which was giving a salute, the tricolors of France and the Stars and Stripes waving together over the door.

Ernest took a mighty grip on himself and strove to fix his mind on something definite.

"That's a recruiting station," he said aloud. "That's a recruiting station."

The surgeon kindly tried to help him locate himself.

"Are you enlisting for Columbia?" he asked, his hand on the boy's shoulder.

In spite of his great effort, Ernest's chin quivered a little, but he answered in a steady, strained voice:

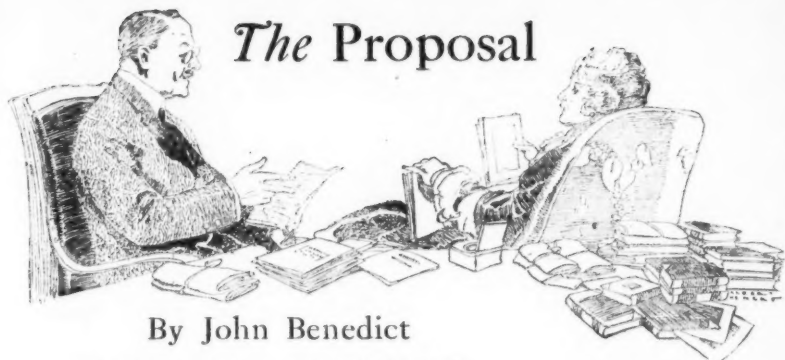
"Yes, with the radio corps—for Columbia!"



AUTUMN LEAVES

DEAR fragile hands, caressed by time
So tenderly! Within thy hold
The autumn leaves become a shrine
Of memories, flame-tipped with gold!

STELLA SAXTON.



The Proposal

By John Benedict

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT HENCKE

AND is this all?" asked the lawyer.

He was called, by courtesy, "literary executor," but poor Angélique knew that this was only to spare her feelings. The hard-headed business man was going all over her late husband's writings—his papers, both published and unpublished; his notebooks; even the half-finished efforts that every author shrinks from exposing—not to do Godfrey honor, not even to see how much of a living would be left for Barbara and herself. No—the real object was to find out whether enough could be squeezed out of the royalties and the copyrights, and all the other things that Angélique didn't understand, to pay Godfrey's debts—his lavish and splendid debts, which had been contracted, like everything he had contracted, with a prodigal hand in royal fashion.

He had been like that—in his writing, so spendthrift of his strength and power it had brought on his sudden and early death; in his living, liberal, unthinking, just so long as it had been luxurious. Newspaper work and magazine articles—they had been as prolific as his poetry; he had commanded the highest market price and he had spent the proceeds as quickly as he earned them. The little wife, with her

Old World ideas of thrift, could not but shudder as she realized how wasteful he must have been to squander such largesse in so short a time.

She recalled how Godfrey had hated to have any one touch his papers; she, his wife, in all her dusting, had never so much as glanced at a single line. And here was this "literary executor" filing and tabulating all those gossamer rainbows of Godfrey's brain just as if they were stocks or bonds or cattle or anything else from which a penny might be wrung.

"You see," said Mr. Briefleigh, with a professional wrinkle to his brow, "all this work of Mr. Barstow's, while it's very good and, just now, very popular, won't, I'm afraid, bring in enough money to satisfy the creditors—not right away, anyhow, and the creditors want their money this minute.

"What the Marlboroughs—Mr. Barstow's publishers, you know, Mrs. Barstow"—he spoke as to an uncomprehending child—"want to do, and what we've got to do in order to raise enough money, is to boost your husband's work—give it a fresh start in some way or other, so that it will attract attention and the public will buy twice as much of it as they've been doing. If you had something of his—I don't care how short it is, so it hasn't

been in print—that we could spring on 'em while the iron is hot, so to speak, we might yet turn the trick. We could double our sales on his entire works if we could advertise that in one of the books there was something never before published. You haven't got anything of that sort, have you, Mrs. Barstow? You don't know of any such poem? You certainly need it now, if you ever did, and so do your creditors."

Angélique paled suddenly. Godfrey's love-making had been as tempestuous as his poetry making; he had, indeed, combined the two. How well she remembered the summer he had appeared at Tours, where she, the daughter of a professor in the university, had met him. Godfrey had not been studying; he had not been doing anything but living, warmly, fully, richly, as was his wont, and, with huge profit, putting his experiences into his work. It had been almost love at first sight between the big, blond, exuberant American and the demure, brown-eyed French girl. If she had never dreamed of any one so magnificent, so impetuous, so like a fairy-tale prince, neither had he ever found a girl so completely to his liking.

The wooing had ended in a kind of whirlwind one June morning, when he had brought her a poem, "The Proposal," saying that she, its inspiration, must give him her answer. The English of the lyric had been plain to her, but just the sound of the impassioned syllables would have been enough; they had needed no translation. Her answer had not been slow in coming, and it had been worthy her lover's lyric.

Angélique treasured that poem as she treasured nothing else. It had a little shrine all to itself; no one save herself had ever seen it. Some day she would show it to Barbara and tell her all it meant, but not yet—not un-

til the girl was older and more sympathetic. Now, at eighteen, she seemed to have little in common with her sad-eyed mother, who sometimes felt very much alone in a strange land.

Brought up in the modern American fashion, Barbara was, above all, practical. Her undoubted musical talent was the only trace she showed of being a poet's daughter. No, it would be a long time before Barbara could be permitted to read "The Proposal." Perhaps, when the girl herself was in love—— But Angélique could not conceive even her practical daughter in love with one of the modern young men. How different they were from Godfrey! How lacking in his tenderness, his steadfastness! Imagine one of them wooing a girl with "The Proposal!"

"Well, Mrs. Barstow," pursued the lawyer, "can't you put your hand on some little thing of your husband's that, for some reason or other, he never printed? Something that you've got tucked away somewhere that nobody knows about? If we can catch the public with a fresh one before his vogue is gone, there's money in it."

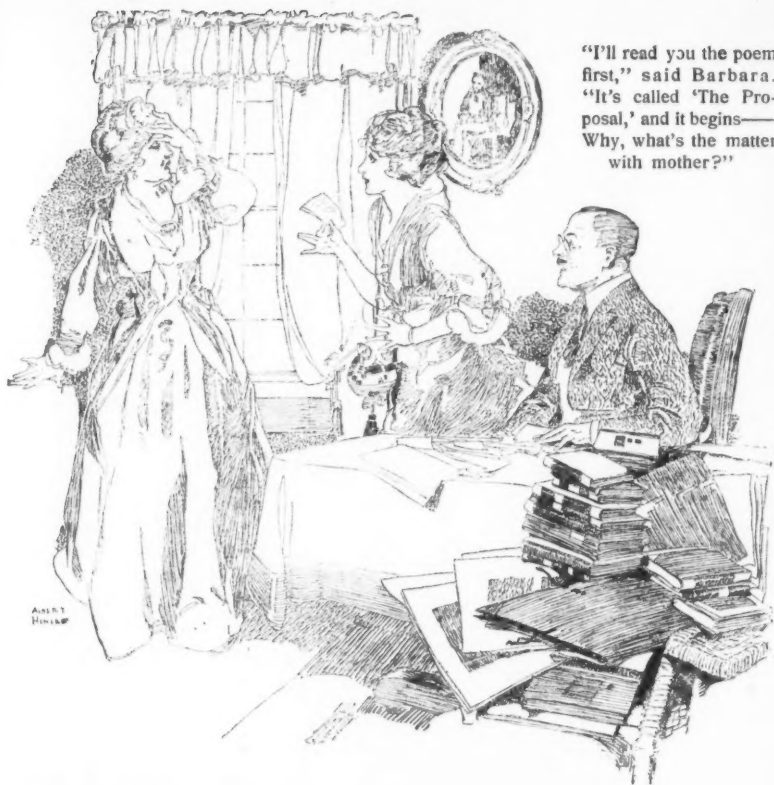
Barbara, who had entered the room, heard Mr. Briefleigh's last words.

"I can help you out," she said, with her customary directness. "At least, I think I can. I saw an old poem of father's the other day that I know has never been published. It was in an old autograph album, and it must have been written when he was very young—long before he met you, mother, for it was awfully sentimental. I wonder why father never published it. He never wrote anything more to the popular taste, I'm sure."

"Where did you say you saw this, Miss Barbara?" asked the lawyer.

He was regarding the girl with the respect that one practical mind feels for another. It was entirely different from his manner toward Mrs. Barstow.

"I'll read you the poem first," said Barbara. "It's called 'The Proposal,' and it begins— Why, what's the matter with mother?"



"Well, you know, I was visiting down on the 'Eastern Sho', as the people who live there call it—father's old home, you know—the particular brier patch where he was born and bred. They think a lot of him down there—he's one of their few celebrities—and one day I was visiting a house where the mother got out a funny old book, an autograph album, with covers all inlaid with mother-of-pearl—they were the fashion, it seems, thousands of years ago—and showed me this poem written by father to her, signed with his name, the date, and all in his own handwriting. The ink was faded and the paper torn, but that poem was hot stuff.

Anybody living any place but on the Eastern Sho' would have had it published long ago and gathered in whatever was to be got from it. Just the fact that you'd had such a poem written to you by Godfrey Barstow would mean fame for any woman. But down there they're as slow as the diamond-backs they're so fond of eating. I don't wonder father pulled out as soon as he could."

Angélique smiled in happy appreciation. Barbara was not without sympathy, after all.

"Some day you shall see a poem that your father wrote to me," said the mother to her daughter. "I don't know

whether you would call it—what is it that you said? Oh, yes—'hot stuff.' But it is very beautiful. He wrote it for me alone. No one else, in all these years, has ever seen it. Under no circumstances would it be possible to publish it—it is too intimate, too personal. But you, some day, I shall show it to. You alone shall share it with me."

"I thought the old lady looked as if she had something up her sleeve," observed the lawyer to himself. Aloud, he said, "Well, I guess you've got just what we want, Miss Barbara. Where and when can we get hold of this poem? We mustn't let the grass grow under our feet, you know."

"Oh, I have it here," returned Barbara, taking a folded paper from the bag in her hand. "I copied it right out of the autograph album then and there. I didn't know, then, how tangled up father's affairs were, nor how much mother needed the money—not to speak of the creditors—but I saw that there was profit in that poem. I've only waited till the right time came to speak about it. I wanted to copyright it first, for one thing, and then—it is such hot stuff, you know—I set it to music and copyrighted that. Once it got into print, somebody would be sure to make a song of it—it makes a peach of a song—and I wasn't going to have anybody else make money out of it when we needed every cent ourselves."

"Good for you, Miss Barbara!" cried the lawyer. "No need for the family fortunes to suffer while you're round. Now let's hear the poem and your song, too."

"I'll read you the poem first," said Barbara, unfolding her paper. "It's called 'The Proposal,' and it begins—Why, what's the matter with mother?"

As soon as Angélique was able to rise from the bed where Barbara and the

lawyer had carried her, she crossed the room to her little old-fashioned mahogany cabinet. She pressed the spring that opened the secret drawer. Out of a faded satin case she took a folded paper, with creases that all but dropped apart. Her tears fell on the faded writing, with its burning words, but they were tears of forgiveness.

"What matters it if there was another," she whispered brokenly. "What I cannot understand is how any one could have resisted him. It is very, very strange," and she pressed her lips to the paper, as she always pressed them whenever she took the paper from its shrine.

In the next room, Barbara sat down at the piano.

"Now I'll give you the song," she said. "What would mother have done, I wonder, had I told her the actual fact—that half the old autograph albums on the Eastern Sho' had that 'Proposal' poem of father's—written to different girls, you know, at different times; each girl, until they got to comparing notes, being under the impression that she had inspired it, that it was written to her alone. Father must have been some bird, mustn't he? Or maybe it's with poets as with prophets—not without honor save in their own country. I wonder whether he wore his hair long? Oh, the girls must have made fun of him if he did! Well, they're proud enough of him now, and of the poem he once wrote to half the girls on the peninsula, though, when it was written, they probably laughed at him and called him a sentimental goose behind his back. I don't believe one of them took him or his poem seriously. It was a case of casting pearls before—terrapin. Not until he laid 'The Proposal' at dear little mother's feet did it meet the reward it deserved."

The Flesh and the Spirit

By E.

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

The third installment of a serial of intense and absorbing interest.

WHAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED IN THE STORY

After three years of an ideally happy marriage, Zena Hammond sees her husband drown before her eyes, as she sits on the beach at Eaststone. She has just been expounding to her new friend, Doctor Gannaby, her belief that death cannot part two people who love each other—that the soul of the dead will find a way to come back in another form; and even in the first shock of her bereavement, her faith holds firm. She resolves to stay on at the hotel in Eaststone to await her husband's return. Doctor Gannaby, who has fallen desperately in love with her beauty and sweetness, sees that it is useless to argue with her and that he must trust to time to turn her thoughts in other directions. A week after Hammond's death, a newcomer arrives at the hotel, Faux Evermore, a reckless, handsome soldier of fortune, a notorious gambler and rake, and yet a man of great charm and magnetism. He and Gannaby take an instant dislike to each other, and Evermore seeing Gannaby's devotion to the young widow and learning of Zena's strange belief, decides to try a bold experiment, with the double object of spiting the doctor and winning a rich wife for himself. His room is over Zena's suite, and that night he lets himself down by a rope of sheets, enters her room, and gets hold of her husband's letters, which he has heard her say she keeps by her bedside. Having read them carefully, he replaces them, without waking her. The next morning, he comes to her with the claim that he is her husband in Faux Evermore's body, citing in proof intimate details of the Hammonds' life together. Zena is only too ready to be convinced, and when he suggests that they be remarried that day, to satisfy the conventions of a doubting world, she agrees at once. Gannaby's first intimation of the affair is Zena's announcement of her marriage. He is mad with rage and jealousy and determines to save her from Evermore's clutches even now. Through a detective, he uncovers the fact of Evermore's nocturnal visit to Zena's bedroom and confronts him with this knowledge, giving him the choice of confessing to Zena himself or letting her learn the truth from the doctor. Evermore counters with a letter he has received in Hammond's mail, which reveals that Hammond, saint as he seemed, had a wife living when he married Zena. Evermore threatens to show this letter to Zena if the doctor forces his hand. Knowing that the revelation would break Zena's heart, the doctor hesitates and finally compromises by granting Evermore three months of grace before making any further move.

CHAPTER XII.

IN the drawing-room on the first floor, floor, Zena awaited him. A servant was carrying in tea. Directly they were alone, Evermore put his arms around the girl and kissed her, and, looking down, he saw again how unsullied she was—that never a dusty breath had blown upon her.

"I've been busy," he said. "Have I been away a long time?"

Like a foolish young husband, he wanted to hear her say "yes." But she only said, "I waited for you to come

out with me, dear," and took up the teapot. She had no questions to ask—"Where have you been? And what have you done? And whom have you seen?" She took unexplained and hurried absences as a matter of course. Doubtless, he thought, this paragon Harry had found it expedient that it should be so.

The quiet room, with its shady spaces, its background of cream walls, its carpet of milk-soft, glowing pile, suited her. Pink roses in great Wedgwood bowls scented the apartment.

"Where are we going?"

"I thought, as soon as we've had a cup of tea, we'd go to see my people. You'll come, won't you?"

"Your people?"

He feared relatives—aunts with longnettes, prim, secretive males, keeping their own inward affairs diplomatically in darkness and concerned openly in properly exclaiming, "What? She's married *that* fellow!" And there might be horrible, questioning cousins.

"My poor people," she said, "at East Poplam, I mean."

"Will they like me to come, too? Won't they hate a stranger?"

"You're not going to be a stranger, are you?"

"I hope not," he said, very nicely.

He watched her toying thoughtfully with the apparatus of the tea table. It was pretty work for women, he thought, women with little white hands, busied among silver and china, with their peculiar daintiness of movement.

They did not linger long by the tea table. Zena already had her hat on, and she wore an air of happy purpose. There were many things to be carried down to the car, and they both helped the servants carry them, for the sake of expedition. Before half past four they were away.

Before five they were in the heart of that fetid place where she really worked, not capriciously, but unsparingly. He was astonished. He had thought delicate ladies took up this kind of disgusting pastime as rather effective, as a piquant foil to their own brightness; but as he followed Zena from tenement to squalid tenement, into such places as he had heard existed, but had never seen before, he was more than once concerned for her actual personal safety. They looked desperate, those dark alleys, those broken, frowning windows, those sinister people who met her and knew her and took her into dreadful rooms like a friend.

Evermore became almost dumb. And while he carried his stack of parcels in her wake—they had, as a mere matter of delicacy, she explained, left their opulent car back in a street which suited its appearance better than this hot and reeking lane of houses—he was wondering rather irritably and uneasily to himself:

"Have I to be a salvation man here? Does she really expect me to be a blue-eyed altruist now when my pockets are full and the whole world waits?"

And while he was still thinking, he went on following her from room to room.

They were all overcrowded piteously. In more than one they found a newborn baby cuddled in the arms of a disillusioned mother lying upon a horrid bed. Altogether there were five new babies whom Zena nursed closely or fondled against her breast.

Evermore saw a new light in her eyes while she held these ugly morsels of humanity—the light of a passionate and craving maternity which had not yet been satisfied—and it thrilled him strangely.

He was not a soft man, and yet—he was thrilled. And he knew what was the matter with him, while he rejected it impatiently. It was the old force, the life force of which he had spoken to Gannaby. All men were the same.

In one place, as that thought came to him, he looked from Zena, holding the baby, to the woman on the ragged bed to whom the baby belonged. And he saw—it was a shock, although he had known, it before—that all women were the same, too.

There was a parcel for this room. Left with nothing to do, he began to open it, and from a corner of the room two scarecrow children crawled up to him.

"Give us some, mister," they begged.

It was a solid parcel. There was a big round cake in it, and he cut slices

with his pocketknife. He rather liked doing it, since there was nothing else to do, and he stood watching those children eat. Eat? They wolfed the food. They reminded him of hungry puppies who had a bad home. He was rather fond of puppies.

"Poor little beggars!" he said.

Zena looked round at him as she handed the baby back.

"Faux," she said, and she spoke as if, in that environment, the name tasted more unfamiliar than ever, "the baby is going to be christened in a fortnight, and we'll sponsor it, won't we?"

"Do you mean we—we'll be godparents?"

She nodded and waited. And what he saw in her eyes suddenly made him answer in a hurry:

"Of course—of course we will."

There was a big hospital near, with a crippled children's ward, in which, it seemed, they had a bed. Had they indeed? And what else, he wondered.

They rejoined the car and motored to the hospital gates.

"We'll go straight to our ward," she said to him.

She showed him there the bed which was his and hers, endowed with the Hammond money, and in it a frail, white, indomitable child of six, whom money could make straight.

The child smiled and shook hands with him on a hint from a nurse. He seemed to know that this brown, healthy person, this stranger potentate, was to take a hand somehow in his recreation. He was, however, very sleepy.

"Fank you," was all he said drowsily.

Evermore went out very silently after Zena, who was extremely happy. And he began to wonder less at the full business she made of life. It was no wonder she was busy. All these wretched people——

The car turned homeward at last.

They left the frowsy streets for cleaner thoroughfares; the very air seemed cleaner and quieter. As they drove, she summed up:

"That's five more godchildren today."

"My dear—my dear child," said Evermore, taking her hand under cover of the tiger rug, "you can't keep on—illimitably—multiplying like that. I mean, where does it stop?"

"We have lots of money."

"And lots to do with it?"

"You are changed," she said, below her breath.

He looked at her quickly and saw the tears rise in her eyes.

He murmured some of the arguments he had used before, explaining, exculpating. She squeezed his hand. As they drove on, he found himself thinking again of the crippled child in the hospital, hearing his thanks for the gift of life which the Hammond purse could bestow.

There had been something about the world this afternoon that was strange, troubling. It wasn't the gay old don't-care place he liked so well.

Was he really to become in any way a salvation man? God!

He could have laughed—— But no; he tried and could not.

He had never cared how many people sorrowed. Why should he? And on the pain and hunger of others he had looked as on weeds spoiling the pleasant garden in which he spent his time.

Evermore opened his eyes very unwillingly. He sighed. How good the good things were! There was a pleasant program to be lived through on twelve thousand a year. Somehow or other he must live it to the full. They must winter in the South, except at Christmas, when they'd go to Switzerland for the sports.

Five slum babies as godchildren of Faux Evermore! It was funny.



"Give us some, mister," they begged.

Amusing as, he told himself, such reflections were, he was nevertheless glad to be back again in Cadogan Place, having a quiet cigarette alone before dressing for dinner. He did not want to go out this evening; he wanted to sit and look at Zena, to hear her talk and to find out more about her and to see how deeply she was invested with all this seriousness. The small smoke room was very quiet when he sank into one of the deep chairs.

One of the first things that caught his eye was a case containing a miniature of Zena on the mantelshelf. He leaned forward and looked at it earnestly.

"She's really a divine child," he said, "just divine."

The afternoon, in review, troubled him.

In the evening they talked. They sat out after dinner on a balcony covered

in like a conservatory and full of flowers. There was a wonderful Eastern lamp hanging there which took Evermore's fancy, but he refrained from inquiry about it. Probably, he surmised, he was credited with having bought it himself in some far bazaar, during that previous incarnation. Rather humorous! He looked at the lamp and wanted to ask it, with polite irony:

"Now tell me a tale about myself, old thing."

Instead of that, he invited, he cautioned Zena to talk. Partly he loved her thrush's voice, with its rich notes, and partly, also, he was out to gather scraps of information. But mostly she wanted to talk about the afternoon.

"You don't mind the godbabies again? You didn't mind the others. It will be ever so kind of you. Kindness matters most—you remember you always said that, Harry—Faux. Such little things help people, and it's so easy to help, isn't it? I wish we could do more for people. We're so happy ourselves, and we can do so little!"

She did not see the growing wonder which he concealed most carefully from her. He had never before sat in a quiet place after dinner with a very beautiful woman concerned with the good and simple things of life, the homely herb roots of human happiness. And when she said, "We can do so little," she did not know that what amazed him was the amount of work which, it was already clear to him, one good woman and one bad man would be able to do.

He came to the knowledge with reluctance.

Alone in the smoke room after she had gone to bed, Evermore took out that letter once more. He was in no doubt as to how he should answer it. The position was not a difficult one; Harry Hammond's will had provided against contingencies. But Evermore

was going to deal with the affair sharply, without delicacy and without mercy.

As he wrote, he had a fierce protective feeling.

MADAM: Your letter to the late Mr. Hammond has come duly into my hands. When you wrote it, I imagine you were not aware of his death. Since then you may have learned of it, and if so, you are doubtless waiting for some authoritative person to answer your letter. Here is the answer.

While your position as the late Mr. Hammond's wife is no doubt perfectly secure, it will certainly not be to your interest to enforce it. Everything was left unconditionally and specifically to the lady who was known as Mrs. Hammond, and you get nothing.

This lady referred to having, however, now done me the honor of marrying me, I will discuss the situation with you at any time and place you care to fix. Yours faithfully,
FAUX EVERMORE.

CHAPTER XIII.

When Evermore had spent a week in the intoxication of the newly married, which had him, to his surprise, as well as other men, in its electric grip, the answer to his letter came.

It was badly constructed, obscure, but out of its rambling sentences he could evolve the fixing of an appointment. The real, or the alleged, Mrs. Henry Hammond would meet him the next day. She chose a cheap and popular tea room as rendezvous, although she made some vague references to her "lawyer's office."

He thought he read her, to the last comma.

When they met, he saw at a glance that his reading had been right. But he was filled through with amazement. This little, flashy, jaded, tawdry woman, who looked her forty years in spite of her attempts at rejuvenation, to threaten the youth and beauty of Zena! It became even more unthinkable than ever. But how it pleased him secretly!

This, then, was Harry Hammond's dark story? He hadn't been immacu-

late; he hadn't been so ascetic, so high, so apostolic a missionary as an admiring world believed him. He had had his past! He'd sinned his sins! He'd sinned, indeed, a big sin, obedient to the crazed call of the flesh like any of his less professing brothers. Oh, that was something to hymn praises for!

The little woman summed up Evermore as quickly as he summed up her, and she smiled at him like a sister. She knew that look—that beginning of looseness around a mouth that had once been fine cut, that network of tiny creases around eyes that had in them all that the world, the flesh, and the devil could teach. And she admired him, too. She liked his length and beautiful make and the vivid brownness of his skin.

"Who are you?" she asked, when they had sat down and were looking at one another with exemplary frankness across a marble-top table. "You've married Mrs. Zena Silvester, have you?" She shook with laughter. "It must be a change for her," she added.

"We haven't met to discuss my attributes, moral or social," said Evermore, returning smile for smile. "We've met to discuss, as briefly as possible, what is going to be done. You want money? Well, that's simple."

"It must be, if you've come into all Zena's," she replied with a jarring candor.

The flicker was in Evermore's eyes, but it steadied to two concentrated pin points as he fixed her gaze. His look was haughty, but in his soul was this knowledge:

"This little travesty of a woman has a right to sneer. What she infers is true."

"What has Hammond been paying you?" he asked shortly.

"Five hundred a year."

Evermore looked her over, apprais-

ing her gown, the horrible drooping feather in her hat, the uncleaned shoe tips. He remarked:

"I don't believe it."

She received this in silence. In her silence was a kind of vast, brazen impudence, a certainty. He added slowly:

"I must see your proofs. You've brought them, I suppose—your marriage lines and all that."

She pulled them from a pocket of her jaded coat. There was a marriage certificate and a few letters from Hammond, which she spread out before Evermore one by one, not relinquishing her clutch on each.

"There are more letters," she said. "I only brought a sample."

A waitress came and stood by them, quietly waiting.

"Tea," said Evermore, "hot things—sandwiches and cakes. Bring us something very nice, please."

When he looked back at the woman opposite, she was rather preening herself. She was not past the vanity of pleasure at being escorted by so good looking a man.

"You're awfully smart," she said rather fatuously. "You're smarter than Harry. My, he was a guy! You knew him?"

"Not at all."

"You didn't miss much."

"Why did he marry you?" asked Evermore with a confidential directness.

"What a question! I like your impertinence! Why does any one marry any one?"

"No, no!" he said. "Cut it out! You and I understand each other awfully well. You know it as well as I do. But I'm beginning to take more than a business interest in the story. Just how did you do it?"

At first he elicited nothing, but afterward, when she had drunk much tea, had been soothed and flattered by the bright and charming persiflage which

none knew better than he how to bandy with any woman, when she was smoking her fourth cigarette, with her elbows on the table and her spoiled eyes filled with a superficial sentiment under the brim of the drooping hat, she told him:

"We met in California, in a little town called Three White Creeks. I was at a hotel there. I don't mind saying I was behind the bar. My word, wasn't Harry young? The youngest thing made! He was full of his social-salvation business even then, and he'd got a lot of money—not as much as he inherited after—and he saw how a pure young girl—that's me—was being spoiled, and we got married——"

"It didn't work?"

"I couldn't stand his sort. I can't to this day. I'd soon had enough. I told him. I said, 'Look here, beat it. But I'm not coming. I'm not going to live your life. I've got my own notions of what life can be.' We had a year of it and then we parted. I never saw anything sicker or sorrier for himself than he was. And what I told you about my allowance is true. He paid me five hundred a year as long as I didn't follow him to England, he said.

"I didn't follow him, either, until I found out he'd dropped into another ten thousand a year, and then I was on his track, what do you think? But he'd got married again. He'd fallen in love with a regular lily that time, and was going to be happy ever after. When I knew about it, they'd been married over two years. It was rather a joke. I've laughed many a time—though my blood was up over the allowance business—to think of Harry, a cross between a fish and a bishop, falling madly in love. But he must have got it badly; there's no mistake about that."

She talked on. Her seventh cigarette was smoked out, and she had drained the teapot, before she paused

to hear what he might have to say, eying him shrewdly.

He said suavely: "Yes, your case is all right. I'm not even going to begin to doubt anything you've said; it all fits in so nicely. But you're up against a big rock, aren't you? The man's dead."

She breathed a little more quickly when she saw those pin points of fire in his eyes concentrated upon her.

"I'm not out for a game," she said. "Don't play with words. What do you mean? I've a right to everything, haven't I? I should have come forward to claim it before this if I'd known he was dead. But I didn't hear of the accident. I don't read the papers once in a moon. Here, tell me, why haven't I a right to everything?"

He explained with a sleek elaboration, and she began to fear him and to distrust his fraternal manners.

"Because a man may leave every penny he has away from his wife if he likes. In this case, the will was carefully worded, and everything Hammond left behind him goes to 'Zena Hammond, née Silvester.' He didn't make any mistakes. The word 'wife' was not mentioned once in the will."

When she had assimilated this, she said with a shaken fury:

"Then I'll tell you what I'll do! I'll go straight to this Zena Silvester——"

"You are speaking of Mrs. Evermore."

"It's all the same to me. I'll go straight to her and say she'll go halves or I'll let out the whole story! And I'm generous, that's what I am!"

"Now," said Evermore crisply, "keep quiet and listen to me. If my wife ever hears the faintest breath of the story, never in this world will you have a penny from either of us. If you dare to approach her in any way whatever, you're done. I've said it. Look at me. Listen—I mean what I say. I know your sort. I haven't a breath of pity for you. You're well qualified to

take care of yourself. But I—I am perhaps better qualified, even. I am perfectly capable of taking care of three people—my wife, myself, and you. We'll include Hammond's reputation, too. I'll look up the sailings, and the first boat possible, you'll go back to where you came from, and I will pay you your five hundred a year on condition that you never set foot in this country again or communicate with any one except myself over this business."

She argued with him a long while in the hot restaurant over the splashed marble-top table.

They parted about half past six o'clock, having been there since four-thirty, and he said:

"Day after to-morrow, I'll meet you here at two-thirty, and I'll pay you five hundred pounds and take your receipt. And some one will see you off on the boat, which sails, I think, about nine o'clock. But of that I'll make quite sure."

"You mean—I'll be shadowed?"

"You'll be escorted."

She looked after him hatefully as he turned away and went from her carelessly into the crowd.

As for Evermore, he felt like a man to whom has come the reviving spring of a big and virile power, the power of a definite resolution to save. And with this new will working in him he went—home, and sat for a while in the small smoke room alone with his pipe, thinking and planning for the where-withal for to-morrow's move.

He did not speak to Zena during dinner of what was in his mind, nor during the evening, when again they sat quietly together in that cool upper conservatory, where the multicolored Eastern lamp swung among branching blossoms and palms. He waited until she was undressing, ministered to by Cur-tice in her room, and he was in the dressing room which opened out of it, still resolving matters in his mind.

He found there, fixed, a resolution that a week ago would not have seemed to him possible, that would indeed have appeared miserable, puerile, fantastic; a resolution against the Hammond money, a distaste for it, a barricade of rigid and unexpected pride as if, somehow, it had badly offended him.

Yet hadn't that golden store which meant so much to men been the bigger part of the reason why he had let himself down through his bedroom window at that hotel, climbed through another window, and descended almost to the action of a common thief or spy, although he had tried to feel that it was enlivened by the instinct for sport?

He listened for the maid's retirement from the adjoining room. He thought he heard her going, and her prim "Good night, madam." Then there was silence, and he tapped at the intervening door and went in. But Zena was not ready for his presence; she was kneeling saying her prayers, her hands over her face, her brown hair meek in a plait down either shoulder.

Evermore went in very softly and looked at her. He was startled. Did people pray at this time of the world's day? And why? For a moment that ever-ready instinct of laughter took him; then it left him gravely wondering. And he knew that to deride would be to offend horribly; it would be almost a direct sin even in his code. So he watched and waited as quietly as he would have waited, if only from good manners, in a church; and when she rose, he went over to her and said uncertainly:

"You were praying?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Do you think it—does any good?" he asked.

She said thoughtfully: "I think so."

Still he was respectful, of her, not of her prayers.

He fingered the long plaits and said: "You have simply lovely hair, haven't



He invited, he cajoled Zena to talk. Partly he loved her thrush's voice, with its rich notes, and partly, also, he was out to gather scraps of information.

you?" and his mind lingered on the other things that he meant to say to her to-night.

At last he began, with an effect of suddenness which he hated:

"Zena dearest, I want you to—will you write me a check for five hundred pounds to-morrow morning?"

She looked into his face; he saw surprise in her eyes.

"But—of course! If you want me to. But why not write one for yourself?"

"My check wouldn't be honored," he said, trying to laugh.

"Oh, but— Faux, I hadn't thought! We must arrange a transfer, if you're to keep this other name, and I suppose you must."

"Yes, I'll keep it," he replied; and he was glad to think contentedly: "After all, perhaps it isn't such a bad name. It might not be worse than 'Hammond,' if people knew."

"You know, Harry—Faux—that the money is yours."

Evermore took her face between his hands.

"I don't know anything of the sort. I'm going to know only what every one

knows. I'm going to let the world put its own valuation on me. Only, for purposes of—of—convenience, I've got to borrow five hundred pounds of you to-morrow morning. In time, I shall repay it."

"Repay it? Repayment—you to me?"

"Repayment, I to you. Yes. Very especially will I repay to you."

She became bewildered; her cheeks flushed and her lips parted like a child's, eagerly, dismayedly questioning.

"I may," he said, "have to borrow a little more—I don't know. I'll see. I'll begin doing my arithmetic. It will all be repaid."

"I don't understand!" she cried. "I don't think you're kind! For the first time, you're unkind!"

But he went on rapidly:

"You don't know—you wouldn't have heard—that I—this Faux Evermore, that is—had one of the best chartered accountancies in the City, which is practically on the verge of dissolving. I—he let it go. It was worth thousands a year. He inherited it from his father, and he let it smash like a bit of china. But I'm going into that business to pull it together again—to be my own man again."

"But you—you're not a chartered accountant."

"Faux Evermore was."

"But—but—is the business yours?"

He touched himself on the chest.

"Well, it belongs to this—to no one else."

"I don't understand it at all, and we can't have any question of money between you and me."

"No," he replied violently, "we can't! We can't! That's the crux of the whole matter. Don't try to understand, don't think, don't ask! Only believe."

"But why—why?"

He caught her in his arms, crying: "Because I love you!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Evermore had a purpose in life the next morning. He was down at eight-thirty to breakfast, served by the parlor maid, who, deeply horrified, but pleasurably intrigued at the turn events had taken within the last weeks, fluttered about him assiduously. At nine o'clock he telephoned to his almost forgotten office in Threadneedle Street, and by nine-thirty he was proceeding thither by tube, instead of, as might have been expected by any who knew him, in one of the cars.

But the cars seemed, exclusively, Zena's.

It was queer once more to tread that thronged and humming street where the business of the world met and bred; to enter, as head of the firm of late Evermore & Son, that office which he had so hated. It was almost empty—quiet and lazy. It had the obvious air of the slug, the ne'er-do-well. A girl typist or two and an office boy comprised the staff under the managing clerk, who had served long under Evermore, senior.

The managing clerk came forward with a good deal of surprise and pleasure, mixed with distrust, when Evermore came in.

He said: "It's a pleasure to see you, sir," but he was evidently nervous at the unaccustomed call. And he looked around his cubicle room anxiously and acutely, as if arraying for inspection the business which did not exist.

He felt the grip of Evermore's hand on his. Evermore had a good handshake.

He said: "Thanks. You may or may not be glad to hear that I'm getting into the collar again from now on, Kent."

They talked for a long while, keenly and pleasurably, of business; and Evermore rang up the head of a big ship-broking firm, asked him to lunch, and went out to call upon others whom his

father had known, but who had forgotten, or lost confidence in, the son.

He went a wonderfully long way toward the rebuilding of the business that morning. His abilities were evident, his brilliance enjoyable, his social graces many, and he had married in a reprehensibly sudden manner one of the prettiest and wealthiest of widows. Men's interest in him was revived and stimulated. They knew he had, now, a beautiful town house, where, no doubt, his wife would ask their wives, where possibly many business dinners to business gourmets might be given. There would be no doubt about the regained success of the Evermore firm with the Hammond money to back it.

Every one was more than cordial to him that day. Twice during the morning, he rang up Zena. Was she all right? What was she doing? Was she missing him? Was there anything she wanted? He'd be home, anyway, at six. Would she care for the theater that evening? Should he get tickets for something? She'd be in, wouldn't she, when he got home?

There seemed to him nothing strange or foolish in these preoccupations that intruded themselves upon the purpose of his day. They were as natural as the sun and air.

He took his shipbroking magnate to the West End for lunch. They were halfway through the meal when his waiter handed him a folded visiting card, on which, when opened, he read, in too familiar writing:

Do turn round and look to the left, and see whom you'll see!

He looked around, and there was Angel Lovell.

She was with a woman friend, about half a dozen tables away in the direction she had indicated, and she was waiting for his recognition of her note. She waited smilingly, cocksurely, with her eyes, dark as sloes, turned toward

him and her long white chin on her long white hand. She was not beautiful, not even good looking, but she had *diablerie*. She was one of those women who, without a regular feature and without any definite trend of brain power, yet write their lives as full of fast-moving plot as the shilling-shocker type of novel. She wore great red fox furs, though the weather was still warm, and a curiously shaped black velvet hat, very daring, and her diamond rings, the only jewels she wore, glittered richly. She was a woman full of danger, born with wiles.

The shipbroker, following the direction of Evermore's bow, said under his breath:

"By Jove! A jolly pretty woman! Who is she?"

Evermore replied, "A Mrs. Lovell," and the other man knew. He recalled the divorce case, with its crude discoveries, and remembered that more than a man named Lovell had been implicated.

Evermore had come to that lunch with a brain teeming with business; not love business, but the harder sort of the ledger, bred in the City, and he wasn't going to be wheedled out of its furtherance by the white face and sloe-dark eyes rising out of a red fox fur setting. Besides, it was over. It had been over long ago, his measure of participation in the affair. A whole year had passed, and wise men managed to put such things behind them. He applied himself to the regaining of the confidence of this stout man who had been one of Evermore & Son's best clients in the old days when money had poured into that solid firm as into a bank, to be poured out again like water through the pockets of the younger partner. And when that long talk drew to an end over the liqueurs and cigars, he had nearly forgotten Angel Lovell. He looked around for her only as the shipbroker rose, protesting the need of

his immediate return to his office, and she had gone, with her friend.

But as he came, presently, leisurely out of the restaurant into the street, he saw, drawn up near by, a cream-colored car, which he knew. It was Lovell's; a car that had, perhaps, seen more of the Hart-Lovell intrigue than any one save Evermore had guessed. He had known of those long days, when, as soon as Angel's first husband had departed for the City to earn those thousands which his expensive wife dissipated like chaff, Lovell had brought the cream car to the Kensington house and had been away with Hart's wife for long days.

Now, there was Angel Lovell, luring him from the window of the car as she had lured Lovell when she had been Angel Hart. She was leaning out watching for him, and when she saw him, she smiled and beckoned. As he approached her without haste, he confirmed in his mind that saying of his that she was one of those women who cannot endure love after it has become matrimony.

When he was near enough, he could smell the faint scent of the powder she used, and it brought back memories of the attraction she had once indubitably held for him, and with the memories came surprise. As he looked, he could not understand how she had ever charmed him; he had almost a sensation of devout horror at the idea, and of thankfulness that it was he, and not Lovell, who had escaped her.

"You wouldn't waste a look on me!" she uttered pettishly. "Positively not a look! And here is Lady Nina Aperly, who declares she is your neighbor down in Dorset."

He looked into the depths of the car and—horrors—so it was! With her hat on, and a floating kind of a veil, and some powder on her face to make it more of a London face, he hadn't recognized Nina in that fleeting glance

at the lunch table. Now, not moving from the corner where she leaned back, she returned his gaze coldly and acidly.

"We've only met once," she said in her strong voice, "and then I was negligible. I was intruding upon Mr. Evermore's honeymoon."

Angel Lovell let an inexpressible shadow pass over her face—she was good at shadows—and sighed abruptly.

"Ah!" she murmured. "You're married, of course. I hope you are very happy."

"Thanks," he replied. "And you?"

She gave another of her abrupt sighs. She might marry many husbands, having a passion that way, but, once acquired, none would be described by her eloquent sigh as other than a brute. She loved the roads that lead to the house of marriage, but being in no sense a domestic woman, the house itself she abhorred.

"I hear," she said, "of your wife from Lady Nina. I hear how pretty she is, and of all the good which she does. It must be delightful to do good. You are very lucky."

"Thanks," he replied again, with intentional banality.

She wasn't going to let him off like that. She read with complete ease the hint his banal monosyllable had meant to offer, but she was immune to the finer sensitiveness.

"I shall love to know her," she announced. "Nina has given me your Cadogan Place address. I must call."

She encountered the anger in his eyes and it fluttered her. She loved to rouse all moods in men, and to fight and coax them. But he said with a frosty voice:

"My wife's visiting list, Mrs. Lovell, is her own affair. And she is always very busy."

"With good works? How nice!"

Then she withdrew from the frame of the open window in response to a touch on her arm from Lady Nina.

Nina filled the window frame then, her strong face set about unsuitably by the waving veil.

"How is dear Zena?" she asked Evermore in a tone as icy as his own. "I'm going there this afternoon for a long talk, and tea. Mrs. Lovell is dropping me on her way back to Edward's Gate."

"My wife is very well," he said, smiling. "I have no doubt she will be delighted to see you. Good-by."

Going back to his office, he rang up Zena again. She was not in; the parlor maid, who answered his call, informed him that her mistress had gone to East Poplam and would not be back till five-thirty. That filled him with thankfulness, anyway. If Angel Lovell intended, perversely, to pay her call that afternoon, five-thirty would be too late for those formal exchanges of courtesy. He imagined Nina going in and sitting grimly until Zena's return, but the other woman would drive away ungratified. She would—What would she do? She would just leave cards. Then he would ask Zena, as a favor to him, not to return the call. That, if social formalities were to count, would end the matter completely. It would be the snub direct, not to be countered. Stupid as these intricacies of convention usually appeared to him, he now saw how wise, how convenient they were.

He bought pink roses on his way home, the late glories of a tropic summer. Those, anyway, did not grow in her well-filled conservatories.

It was after six when he reached home, with his great bouquet of roses in a tissue-paper shield. He had anticipated the strident hum of Lady Nina's voice proceeding from the drawing-room, and there it was, resonant and strong, gaining force, as it were, with the pursuance of some grievous argument. Oh, what women there were in a good world! He listened for a sec-

ond or two on the landing outside the closed door, debating whether to enter or not, whether to face again Lady Nina's platform presence.

But he decided against it.

"No," he said. "By Jove, I won't! Not after a long, tiresome day! I'm only flesh and blood."

In the smoke room, that dear little cream-and-crimson haven, he found rest. It had French windows opening on to a tiny paved courtway, where ferns clambered over rocky beds; it was all the great house had of garden. He sent for whisky and soda, but after the order had been given, changed it to tea. After all, it was rather good for one to knock off alcohol sometimes—just as a test of will—just as—

Evermore stopped there. He knew quite well why he had changed his order, but he was as reluctant as any other man to acknowledge the power of the habit which, up till as recently as a week ago, had threatened to prevail. It had been creeping on him more quickly than he knew, that slavish custom, that dirty habit. It was not until he pulled up short with a jerk, like this, that he recognized, with due respect, its power.

As twilight was falling over the tiny courtway outside, Zena came in quietly. She was very pale and looked rather like a child who has received portentous news. He got up to receive her and felt her eyes upon him, dwelling wonderingly. From him, her glance went round the room; she saw the tray of whisky and soda, put aside, the tea things, and seemed, anxiously, to be constructing their explanation. He read all this in her mind as clearly as on a big printed page in a primer. Then she looked at the pink roses and, catching them up to sniff them, was instantly pink and pleased herself.

"For me?" she cried.

"For you," he said; and, "I've been thinking of you all day."



"I will pay you your five hundred a year on condition that you never set foot in this country again."

"Nina has been here," she told him hesitatingly.

He nodded.

"I know. I met her at the Ritz. Has she gone?"

"Yes."

"Come along, baby; and sit down and tell me what you are thinking of," he said lightly, drawing her to the big chair from which he had just risen.

He put her into it, pink roses and all, and, sitting on the arm beside her, touched her warm brown hair lingeringly.

"Poor Harry!" she said. "Nina has heard of you—*this* you—before. She knows—such a lot about you—about Faux Evermore. And she would tell me everything."

In the short silence that fell, he thought rapidly, hoping that Zena had kept her queer, incredible belief to herself during that conversation with the rampant Nina; hoping she had let that

lady's surprise and chagrin and other emotions pass without explanation. He asked her this:

"You didn't—didn't—tell her anything, of course?"

"No. I quite see as you do—that it's hopeless. Only when she saddled you with all this man's sins, it seemed——"

"It seemed what?"

"As if I couldn't bear it."

"Dear little girl!" he exclaimed, touched, and he sat silent for a few moments more. Still, at times, her faith and loyalty left him amazed. They were so strong and strange—so sure.

He asked presently:

"What was the worst she said? Out with it! I ought to know my merits and demerits, oughtn't I?"

"She told me she was with a Mrs. Lovell to-day when they met you. Mrs. Lovell was a Mrs. Hart, but her first

husband divorced her, and you—I mean, Faux Evermore, was implicated in the case, though the charge wasn't proved against him. Nina would tell me everything, so horribly, so plainly. She wanted me to know, she said, every detail, so that, should occasion arise, I would be better armed to protect myself against the man I've married."

"Damn her insolence!" Evermore breathed to himself furiously. But he went down on his knees to Zena and, looking at her across the sheaf of roses, whispered:

"What did that Gorgon think I wanted to do to my little girl, then?"

"I don't know."

Then he saw that, quiet as she had been since her entry, she was trembling. He soothed her quickly with hands that had learned a cunning gentleness through subtle treatment of horses and dogs, creatures with whom he was familiar. And he coaxed her.

"Poor little girl!" he said. "Tell me all about it. I ought to know, oughtn't I?"

"I don't know that I can tell you. Perhaps—do you remember— Did you read the Hart-Lovell case?"

What an ironic question, he thought! But he answered gravely:

"I think I remember most of it."

"Because here are cuttings from one or two papers. Nina brought them to me. She says this Mrs. Lovell gave them to her. And you could read them if you like."

With a hard effort, he bit back the words that rose searing hot to his lips. Angel and her deviltries! Her mean and callous spite and fury! How well he knew her! And since they had left him in sunny Piccadilly, outside the Ritz that afternoon, this was what those two women had hatched! Lady Nina, he knew, was one of those silly, rampant fools who wreak mischief unwittingly and incalculably. But, Angel Lovell was different. She knew

better, was wiser and more subtle, and she would play the most diabolical game in the world merely to amuse herself.

As Evermore took from Zena's rather shaky hand the strips of newspaper matter she drew from the pocket of her skirt, he felt a deep irritation that was more shame than anything else. He hated that she should handle even the records of such a business. It was like defiling a child. And when they were in his hand, he took them away from her proximity, going to the window as if to make the most of the failing light to read them.

She sat very still and watched him.

He came back to her side after a while, not having read a word—did he not know the whole stupid, shameful business too well?—but having been concerned during that time with meditation. Crushing the slips of paper in his hand, he said:

"You're not going to let it worry you too much? Surely you expected there might be—a past. That there might be liabilities—whatever you like to call them. One can't exactly—annex another identity and find it tally completely with one's own."

"No."

"There's only one thing I want to ask you, dear girl. If this Mrs. Lovell should call on you, for Heaven's sake don't receive her!"

"She left cards this afternoon."

"Well—for God's sake don't return it!"

"Why?"

"My dear child, it's obvious that she's not the kind of person for you to know."

"She may have been—Nina says she was—unfortunate, deceived, badly used."

He longed to be able to cry:

"Well, I'm Evermore, and I should know about that! But all I know is that she's the veriest shrew and a sexual gourmet. And she doesn't deserve

an ounce more pity than she has received; indeed, not so much, for she has been clever. She's made a good bid for pity and she always will."

But what he said, when he trusted himself to speak, was:

"Your friend Lady Nina is one of those women born with a brief against all mankind. She's womankind gone mad, and that's all there is to it."

In the depths of the chair, his wife was so quiet that he came close to peer at her through the gloom.

"We'll have a light. It's getting eerie, isn't it?" he exclaimed briskly.

But she demurred.

"Please don't. Not for a minute, anyway."

"Why?" he asked, bending over her. "Is there anything else? If so, out with it, and let's get it all over."

She replied, after a difficult pause:

"Only that Nina declared Faux Evermore was known to have been a—a rake—"

"That's vague, I must say."

"Nina said—'a profligate.'"

"That, too, is open to construction. And how women of her type love these crude words!"

"Please listen. She said he'd wasted a fortune in a few years because he lived—carelessly. He drank."

"She seems to have been at pains to discover details of his really quite obscure past. He wasn't in any way a public character, you know."

"Oh, please listen!"

Hearing the break in her voice, he went down on his knees again and caressed her, and she began to sob on his shoulder. She trembled, and he felt her tears on his neck. She moved him more deeply than he had imagined was possible. All at once he was at his wit's end.

"My darling," he begged hoarsely, "tell me what's the matter! Tell me all you're thinking! You know, if there's anything I can do to comfort

you about—things—why, I'll do it. If there's any assurance, any promise I can make you, it's as good as given. Now won't you ask me for some promise? Just any old thing you like—and you've won it. I'll do anything if you'll only stop crying."

Her tears were terrible to him, and he was ready to take any vow. But he had to beg her over and over again before she could put the thing in her mind definitely.

She said brokenly:

"I'm such a fool! I don't know things. You make me feel that. You make me feel as I've never felt before—that there's such a lot in the world I don't know and that I'm frightened to know. It was never like this before. You always made everything so simple, so sure. Can't you help me again? Don't you see—I feel—"

"Yes, little dear," said Evermore, "tell me what you feel."

"As if," she cried, "this man, this Evermore, will be too much for you. He drank—can you beat him? Can you win? Are you strong enough? You've got to bear the odium of his past, but can't—can't—you redeem his future for yourself?"

"Not only can I, but I will," he vowed.

There came to him in that moment the memory of his loose mouth in the glass. Was that what had frightened her to tears? Suddenly he declared:

"It's not quite as you think it. Just now I sent for whisky—you see it over there? But I changed my mind; it was to please you, because I can see what you've been thinking—how I appear to you."

She raised her head. Their faces were close together in the half light, both earnest, and she looked at him closely.

"I was afraid," she half whispered. "You have it—I saw it—in your face."

"What?"

"I can't tell you, but I think—all the things I'm stupid about, that I don't know. You're somehow like a man from another world."

"An infernal one?"

She replied, "Yes," with an almost childish realism, yet was strangely convincing.

"Set me a task," said Evermore with quick passion. "Tell me of something to do, and I'll do it. I will prove myself to you and take all your fears away."

She thought and, taking him at his word, replied:

"Help Jack Apperly."

"I'd rather it were some one else than that woman's brother," he said, "but if you want it done, I'll do it. If any lead I can give him will make him sober, I'll give it. And will that right me in your eyes?"

"You'll help other people, be kind? It's kindness that matters most. But you've forgotten——"

"I have indeed," he admitted hurriedly.

"I'll remind you."

He was filled with astonishment at himself—at what he had promised and sincerely elected to perform. But she leaned forward and kissed him, and he forgot all his doubts.

It seemed that Jack Apperly was to dine with them that night alone.

When Zena left the two men together after dinner, Evermore approached his task with his saving sense of humor. There was Nina's brother, with many of her marked attributes of face and manner, save for an added chubbiness that dissipation would soon render flabby and a fraternal bearing toward his host as of one jolly sinner to another, and Evermore could not think how to begin. But at last he asked:

"You and poor Hammond were particularly good friends, weren't you?"

"We were," said Apperly. "He was

a decent sort, an awfully kind old blighter. Too old for Zena, though, you know."

"Something over forty, I suppose. I'm only five years short of it myself."

"You!" Apperly exclaimed, staring. "Are you really, though?" His eyes twinkled amid the encroaching fleshiness. "I always say," he confided, "that if a fellow enjoys life, lives pretty hard, and gets the most out of it, he wins all ways. It hasn't hurt you. You look as hard as nails and as jolly as sin."

"I'm both, thanks."

Young Apperly's eyes continued to twinkle at him. His thought was plain:

"It's a joke seeing such a man in Harry Hammond's place, marrying his widow, sitting at the head of his table, driving his cars, ordering his servants, spending his cash. My hat, he's struck it lucky!"

And Evermore, leaning forward to him, answered the look confidentially in words:

"I know exactly what you're thinking, my dear fellow, and you're absolutely, strikingly right. You're astonished, aren't you, like all the rest of the world, both at my audacity and at my amazing good fortune? To tell you the truth, I've begun to be very astonished myself."

Apperly laughed.

"Oh, you're rich!" he said. "I like that! Of course, I, like any one else, congratulate you with all my heart. I congratulated you down at Sunday, didn't I? Why did they call that ripping little place by such a fool name? Yes, and I congratulate you again. It's courage that wins, every time."

"You'd rather say sheer, cool cheek, wouldn't you?" Evermore asked.

"It's a better word," Apperly owned.

"You've hit it," said Evermore. "It is indeed."

Apperly had drunk nothing but seltzer water at dinner, but now, as

if Zena's departure removed from him some obligation, he looked toward the port and fingered his glass uncertainly. And Evermore said:

"Why, yes, if you like."

His own glass was empty, and he, too, had drunk nothing at dinner time. Apperly had noted it.

"Aren't you——" he began. "Don't you——"

"I've sworn off for a while," Evermore replied.

"Oh," said Apperly with a fidgety laugh, "why's that?"

"Because I share your own weakness."

Jack Apperly started and stared.

"Oh!" he said shortly. "I wonder what you know about me?"

"Just that," Evermore stated frankly. "I know your trouble. I recognize it. It's mine—or it might be in a year or two. And I know when to stop, don't you see?"

Apperly was quiet for a while, smiling uneasily and playing with his wine-glass stem. Evermore went on:

"Forgive my questions, won't you? But Hammond and you were awfully good friends, weren't you? You thought something of him, and he was a helpful kind of chap?"

"He helped me," Jack Apperly said suddenly and soberly.

"I gathered that," Evermore replied. "He kept you company in a resolution. You'll forgive my knowing all about it."

"Since you know——"

Apperly fidgeted, half laughing, half angry.

"I want to say something," said Evermore, "and it's this: I want to shake hands with you on something. Let's both swear off any form of alcohol for a year. I don't know if it's any good to you to keep that kind of company with me, but I know it might be a great deal of good to me to keep that kind of company with you."

Apperly laughed outright.

"You!" he uttered, his eyes twinkling. "*You!* Of all men, you! Evermore, it's rich! Are you reforming?"

"Perhaps."

"My God!" said Jack Apperly, with a scream of laughter. "If you can do it, I guess I can."

Evermore sat very still.

"I say," he asked, "what do people say about me?"

"Oh, you know," Apperly replied.

"Well," said Evermore, "perhaps I do. But about this agreement? Are you on?"

For some while Apperly hesitated. At one moment he looked insulted; at another on the verge of a second yell of laughter. His little eyes twinkled and twinkled. Presently his hand shot out, and Evermore grasped it.

"Right-o," said Apperly. "We'll see who tumbles first."

"We'll make a book on it," Evermore replied. "I'll bet you anything you like it won't be me."

They went through the drawing-room, presently, very friendly, to the conservatory, where Zena sat with the Eastern lamp glowing above her. And Jack Apperly went to her and sat down on a low stool near her feet, took her hand, and said with a softness in his eyes:

"Zena, we've got a bet on."

CHAPTER XV.

The Evermores did not go down to Sunday again for some weeks. They were too busy in town. It was wonderful how busy they were. Every morning he went early to the City, to set about regaining the wealth of the business which his father had despairingly left him. He strove earnestly during these weeks, and to a surprising degree he triumphed. His old clients came back, one by one, at first cautiously, then with increasing confidence.

He worked all day, hard, his only hour of relaxation being, sometimes, a rush west to lunch with his wife.

They were like leaves from a courtship, these lunches snatched from the City's hurry and toil, and they were full and fresh with interest always. They were not like the many husband-and-wife lunches one sees taking place daily and dutifully in the restaurants of London, where two people meet and eat and try to resurrect dead stores of conversation. Zena had so much to tell him always, and he had so much to tell her. She was working unsparingly in East Poplam, canvassing, preparing, with a wonderful power of method sprung direct from inspiration rather than experience, for the autumn crusade which her heart was set upon conducting in those grim streets, and in which she unquestioningly trusted him to join. They had planned it all together long ago, hadn't they? They had promised it to themselves before—

She always shuddered when she spoke of that week of widowhood. But she dated things by it now—those that had happened before, those that would happen after. Much, much was going to happen after! The scope of her plans—their plans—sometimes filled Evermore with a serious perturbation; they were so courageous.

She was like a child setting out to slay dragons, yet whose toy sword waxed and grew in her hand until it



As he looked, he could not understand how she had ever charmed him.

became a formidable weapon of good against evil, so that beneath it the dragons died.

Before they went down again to Sunday early in October, there was a very big christening party in the Cadogan Place house. The five slum babies, the five mothers, and, miraculously, the five fathers, were gathered together in the drawing-room. The five fathers were fierce creatures, antipathetic and sardonic, yet bemused by the situation to a certain thoughtfulness; but the five mothers with the babies in their arms were very happy. It seemed to Evermore that they were wonderfully recuperated since the time, which did not seem so long ago, when he had seen them lying, looking at the point of ex-

tremity, on their poor beds in their smelly rooms. They sat on Zena's chintz chairs, and showed each other their burdens. None of them were first babies, but there hung about them a first-baby importance, because of the christening party given in their honor.

Evermore took the men down to the smoke room and gave them a cigar apiece. He made what was to him a most unwonted effort, an effort that almost eclipsed all the other astonishing efforts he had made under Zena's auspices. It was strange, without ulterior motive, to trouble oneself to be kind and considerate and generous and painstaking with people so utterly outside one's radius, as it were. But by and by the interest of it crept upon him. No longer so convincingly hostile, they talked to him, and he learned something of the difficulties of mere living, difficulties which, in the estimation of such as these, had never touched him.

He had thought he was poor when he had dissipated one fortune and couldn't find another at once. Here were men living monthly and yearly, for long lives, within a few shillings of destitution; living and begetting others like them; trying often to do their best; falling often back into the slough of their worst.

They looked at him very shrewdly, too. Born and bred in the necessity for quick reading of faces, with the swiftness of the slums they had instantly his measure. He hadn't erased yet, by any means, the look of the indulgent man, though he had the figure of the athlete. One said to him slyly:

"You don't offer us anything to drink, sir."

Evermore smiled at him with that convivial flash of white teeth in his brown face.

"Not here," he said. "I'm sorry, but I don't offer it here."

"Don't you take it yourself, sir?"

"No," he said, "I've sworn right off for a whole year."

Two men chorused: "You'll never keep to that."

"I shall," he replied good-humoredly. "I've got a bet on it—more than I'd care to lose."

"Fancy that!" said one of the five. "Fancy you havin' the money for a drink and wastin' it on bettin' you won't drink nothin'! My Gawd!"

Evermore said in a flash:

"I'll lay any or all of you fellows ten pounds to ten pence that you can't join me."

The youngest father accepted first. He exclaimed breathlessly:

"Ten pun'! Done with you, sir!"

And the others followed.

"Oh, my soul!" Evermore said to himself, when he realized the piece of work he'd done. "Have I been conducting a temperance meeting on a Sunday afternoon at my time of life? What's coming to me next, I wonder?"

They were asking argumentatively:

"Well, how'd we do it? Do we sign a pledge? Or does you take our word at the end of the year? Or what, guv'nor?"

"I take your word," he said instantly, and pleased them.

The christening party was conveyed to the church in the two cars and a taxicab. At the church other relations joined it, tired, frowsy people with very dirty hands that looked as if never more in this world could they be scrubbed clean.

It was a very strange afternoon for Faux Evermore.

And afterward the parents and babies and all the frowsy relations, joyfully scenting food, were driven back in the cars and the taxicab, and they sat round the dining-room table, where a lavish christening feast was spread. There were presents for the babies ranged and ticketed on the sideboard.

Zena had forgotten nothing and she was radiant.

"Wonderful!" said Evermore to himself as, at her urgent sign, he seated himself at the foot of his table among the strangest guests he had ever entertained. "It's just wonderful!"

The five frosted cakes took his imagination. They were all dated and labeled—"John Christopher Adams, July the 31st," and "Sylvia Toptree, August the 20th," and the others, each accurately designated.

Fancy taking all that trouble, that thought, for the people of the slums!

Thinking this, he looked around his table, and he saw the pleasure there. And then he understood, in a dim way, a little further. He knew that the giving even of such a little happiness could not be scorned, that the innocence of such pleasures was without price, and that to make ten people—who were usually sad—very pleased indeed with life—and with the babies whom they hadn't in the least wanted—if only for a quarter of an hour, was a thing well worth doing, because all happiness and all innocent pleasure were a contribution to the world's sum of beauty.

The occasion impressed him unduly; it lingered with him after the guests had been sent home, and the servants, smiling confidentially over the matter, had thrown open all the windows. He told his wife about it, when he had followed her to her room.

"What a queer afternoon!" he said. "I liked it, rather. By Jove, didn't they eat! It's rather jolly seeing people happy, isn't it? I quite see your point, darling, over all this. I own candidly I rather liked it."

"We had five babies at my first christening party, do you remember?"

"Did we? I—I wish things weren't quite so hazy."

"You were lovely to them; you were just yourself. And Mrs. Toptree told me about her husband's promise to you

—not to drink for a whole year. He whispered it to her in church. She says if only he keeps it, life won't be the same thing."

"It was a bet, as a matter of fact. I laid 'em ten pounds apiece that they wouldn't do it."

"We're going to win when we start the campaign next winter. Can't you feel it?"

She put her arms about his neck, and he gripped her round the waist, and they stood smiling into each other's eyes.

"You looked so awfully sweet," he said, "when you held those brats in church and handed them to the parson. And they were so ugly, weren't they? All of them alike, red and dark and dreadful! Do you know what I was thinking?"

"Tell me."

"I was thinking how pretty you'd look with a baby of your own, a really pink, charming kid, such as yours would be. I don't know much about them—I've only seen them in prams and so on, you know, in the park—but I couldn't help the thought." Then he stopped and added abruptly, darkly: "At the same time, I thought that I didn't in the least deserve that such a thing should happen."

Evermore had found this very good thing about Zena—that she accepted his change of moods, their darkness and their light, without an effort at question or analysis, so that he need not keep before him always that boggy of a perfect consistency to what might have been Hammond's own views. But when he said that, rather hopelessly, about his deserts, she replied tremblingly, in a thrilled voice:

"Tell me what makes you say so, and why you think so. Do you *want* to think it? Tell me, for I must know."

"I have many reasons, little girl," he said, and he began to think of them slowly, with a hateful regret. He did

not in the least want to regret, but he could not help it.

Faux Evermore with sons—and, what was more, daughters! It was to him, quietly and certainly, unthinkable. Then Zena said whisperingly:

"I don't want you to think—like that. For I've something to tell you—a great surprise after these three years in which we've wanted it so."

He guessed at once, as any man would, and the news was overwhelming.

"Oh, Zena!" he murmured. "Oh, my little darling, is it true? Are you sure?"

She answered with a kind of fearful joy:

"Nearly. And—would you be glad?"

"Glad!" he said strongly. "Glad! What a poor word!"

And he realized suddenly how poor a little word it was, how dull and tame. A new vision came to him as he stood there with the thrilled girl in his arms, in which he could read the real and simple and natural laws that made the world, that lighted and warmed it and preserved its beauty, which this child woman had always kept before her eyes.

He kissed her.

"You little wonder!" he exclaimed, marveling.

He saw how pale the exertions of the afternoon had left her, the dim blue shadows under her awe-struck eyes, and he was filled with that ache of love and pity and glory, that vast compunction, which every man so situated knows. He became immensely sorry and contrite with his pride. Putting her with a tender autocracy upon a couch, he sat by her and held her hand and wondered what he should do for her. And already the blind twilight of the coming fear visited him.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she asked. "You remember what you used to say, when I so wanted this to happen? Per-

haps, you said, we'd got to suffer somehow first. We'd always got to pay its price for what we wanted very badly. Then—we were parted. Now—this!"

He kissed her again, not answering except by something indefinite. He could imagine Hammond, a remorseful fanatic with a skeleton shut in an insecure cupboard, burning to scourge himself free of a sin of which he would never be free, setting tasks, allotting suffering for himself; a morbid and sorrowful wrongdoer afraid of doom; a man atoning secretly and passionately with good works to the whole world. And presently Evermore asked:

"Have you really wanted a child very badly all this time, Zena?"

"I've prayed for one every day. You know."

That was strange, too, an irony of fate—that it should be granted to him, who had deceived her, to give her first what she wanted. He was marveling at it, but complacently. Already he was congratulating himself; already there was a high pride in him living beside those tremors for her. It would be good to have a son.

A son! A boy for whom to pick up that business out of the City mud! There was now indeed no time to lose, no wasteful hours for the pranks and follies that a vagrant may play with life. A son! Some one for whom to stand straight and live cleanly!

Already his mind drove ahead. The baby-to-be had long passed its first and agonizing birthday; it was out of petticoats; it was straight and strong, a fine little body; it was hot and keen, in white flannels on a beautiful hard pitch smooth as a billiard table, with the sun blazing on its fair head and its eyes like the eyes of a real boy playing a first-class game. The people in the pavilion cheered, and the parents of more mediocre boys, in the stand, cheered, and the baby-to-be carried his bat home. Well done!

His son!

From that moment beside Zena's couch, holding her hand, which already seemed vested with some new and mystic quality, Evermore began to live up to the child who should come.

CHAPTER XVI.

The next week-end it was Evermore himself who wanted to carry his wife down to Sunday. He wanted her, more than ever, all to himself, and he was no longer bored by the idea of the cottage in the Dorset lanes. And he prevailed with her, on the condition that she was to return to Cadogan Place on Monday with him, because there was all that work waiting for her to do in East Poplam. She wanted to do it more than ever now, she explained. Couldn't he imagine that? Think of all those poor babies! She owed it to her own baby to be very, very kind to them.

All that week Evermore worked like a horse all day, crowding into the hours between nine and five much work that he would have remained at his office late to perform, had there not been that really urgent reason for hurrying home—the dearest girl in the world who needed care. Never before had he faintly guessed how dear a woman might be to a man. But even with that heavy increase of work which he invited and took upon his shoulders so enthusiastically, he had time to go with Zena on one or two afternoons to see Sylvia Toptree and John Christopher Adams and the rest of the godchildren and their parents, besides many others. He even took a sort of interest in the babies' welfare. That is to say, he really had a feeling that it would be better, more pleasing to him, for them to grow up straight and healthy than crooked and vicious, and that if any little effort on his part could bring about that consummation, he would be almost willing to make it.

He was introduced one evening to the boys' club, inaugurated by Harry Hammond in his feverish search for expiation, and he renewed his acquaintance with young Sylvia Toptree's father and the other fathers with whom he had made that wager. They wanted to assure him that, for their part, they were on the road to winning that bet as easy as easy; and their wives looked more contented and less anxious.

He saw that this was all quite good—that it was a piece of work upon the most interesting of all materials, humanity, which you saw growing under your hands. It was creation.

He was popular instantly at the boys' club. He sat at the piano and played ragtime and let them sing, and he told them yarns, of which he had many, culled from experiences in many parts of the earth. He promised to bring a lot of photographs of queer people and things and places, and that booked him for an engagement with them on another evening. They asked for the photographs upon a screen, and that involved him in time and trouble and a regular sort of lecturing innings. Was it worth it?

Evermore had an excellent quality which had never left him throughout his physical and moral wanderings, and that was his lust for sport. He desired always to see a good dog win a fight and a good boy given a fair chance to come out on top of the world, and he didn't mind betting with himself on the grit and pluck of those gamin faces at the club. After all, a good man was as well worth while as a good dog. He wasn't going to be a salvationist, though. He looked on with patience at a very thin curate who came in to pray at the beginning, and to tinkle out a hymn at the end, of the proceedings, and he saw to it that the ragamuffins listened to the shepherd as politely as he did himself. But for his part, he bought two pairs of three-pound-gloves

and took them with him on his second visit there.

He rather liked the way those chaps cheered at the notion of a regular boxing competition.

He explained to them how hard you had to train. You couldn't drink, and you must be ready to knock off cigarettes at any old time; you must, in fact, be master of yourself completely. And when he had said it, he was conscious suddenly of that loose look he had found about his own mouth.

He thought: "Can all these nippers see? Is it what they're staring at me for?"

He knew it wasn't, of course. They were listening enthralled to the gaudy prospects opened before the club. But the thin curate was looking as if he knew, curse him!

Yet, at the end, the curate came up gratefully and said:

"If you'll only stick to us! It'll be fine!"

Evermore felt he had done a good deal by the time that week was over and he carried Zena away in the gray car down to Sunday.

They found heavenly peace there, the hushed kind of stillness that informs a warm autumn day. The *borzoi*, who was sunning himself just before the porch, walked forward and nuzzled his snout rememberingly into Evermore's hand. The man thought warmly:

"Good chap! He's my friend."

Zena motioned Mrs. Lambert smilingly to go upstairs with her, and the three women, including Curtice, disappeared to the first floor. Evermore guessed that Mrs. Lambert was to be told the news; so he told the *borzoi*, sitting in the hall with the hound's long head on his knee.

"Here, old fellow," he said, whispering, "listen to me. There's going to be a baby in this family within the next year, and you'll be ousted. How do you like it?"

He felt ridiculously light-hearted.

There were to be no more teas out in the orchard that year. There was a little sharp tang in the air, tempering the sun, and a wood fire was burning odorously in the hall and the tea table set out beside it. But the canaries twittered and the red geraniums flamed in the window, as if expecting everlasting summer. And presently Mrs. Lambert came down and went bustling about the carrying of teapots and muffins, with a kind of summery glow of pleasure about her, too. She radiated repressed ardor and felicity. Almost friendlily she looked toward Evermore now, as if forgiving him for the unjustifiable piracy of his marriage because he had wrought a happy miracle in the house.

The next afternoon, Lady Nina Apperly came, and not alone. She brought with her, white, mystic, ardent, and bizarre, Angel Lovell. She wore an autumn country suit of rough cream cloth, a black tam-o'-shanter, and green jade earrings, and she had that voluptuous look generally attributed to finely built women, but which, nevertheless, such spare, slim, passion-eaten women as she frequently possess.

The hide-proof audacity of her in thus invading the retreat of Sunday took Faux Evermore's breath away, used as he was to it. And he was very angry.

Few things could have stirred him so as the sight of this woman advancing through the hall to the fireside where Zena sat, deep buried in one of the brilliant chintz chairs, a box of bonbons open at her side, the big hound's head on her lap, and her eyes dreaming sacredly into the jumping flames. He knew so well of what she was thinking—how her hopes were flying ahead as his thoughts had done on first hearing the important news, and how happy she was in them. They had been sitting here since lunch, and for some time he had been watching her, content just

to do that, seeing the under-surface smiles, like eager shadows, ripple across her face, and hearing the thrush notes deepen and trill in her voice when, now and again, out of her abstraction, she spoke to him.

Then that high, languid, strident voice floated through the opened windows from the region of the front door.

"Good day, Lambert," it said. "Is Mrs. Evermore in?"

He knew at once, fiercely, that here was Lady Nina bent upon disturbing the blessed peace.

She came in, and behind her, with that smooth, sailing, yet provocative walk, came Mrs. Lovell. Nina introduced her to the hostess with a loud hardihood.

"Dearest Zena, I've brought Mrs. Lovell. She paid her first call upon

you very recently in town, and here she is again before you've had time to return it. But she's staying the week-end with me, and, as I tell her, we're not terribly formal down here."

When Zena had taken Angel Lovell's hand, and polite greetings had been spoken with the natural dissimulation of women, Lady Nina added:

"Your husband she knows already."

Then Zena rose to the occasion with

10



"How—kind—your wife is!" she murmured. "Has she left us on purpose?"

the aplomb—and perhaps with a faint flash of the instinctive and protective malice—of an older woman. She made her reply not to Nina, but to Angel Lovell, looking her over from head to foot in such a way that the other woman knew not one tired line on her face had escaped the survey.

"So I understand. I seem to know you quite well myself. Faux has told me all about you."

Angel Lovell had the power of checking blushes, but her eyes fell, and she was at a loss. She looked up at Evermore and saw the unveiled relief in his face.

"I wonder?" she thought.

Disappointment began to tinge the color of the afternoon. She lived for mischief. And she had given a careful extra rake to the black tam-o'-shanter because it was going calling upon Evermore's wife. She sat down demurely.

"Faux," she plained, "what did you tell your wife about me?"

He handed the question on to Zena:

"What did I tell you, dear?"

Guilelessly as a child, but cleverly as a woman, she answered:

"I'm afraid we were discussing your interesting story, Mrs. Lovell."

Angel Lovell blushed then, a blush over which she had no power. That this girl should dare to fling an open gage in her face, when she had come for the purpose of pursuing a diplomatic war! It was crude! Did she really know everything that—well, that people had thought? Was she really going to take up that pose of noble loyalty through thick and thin to a man whom all his intimates knew as an attractive, but pretty thorough rake? Was there indeed nothing to tell her, no excitement to be had?

Nina opened her eyes wider and pulled her scarf very tight about her shoulders. Then she sat like a rock; even her floating veil seemed petrified, as she searched for something to say.

She, too, felt that a kind of unanswerable crudity had been committed, an example of the plain speaking that, theoretically, she so heartily advocated. Was that, then, the attitude which dear little soft Zena intended to adopt to this poor, broken, beautiful, deluded woman who had been the sport of scoundrels?

"I know all about you—thank you," calmly and prettily! Inferring, "So

there's no more to say. Don't bore me with details, will you?"

Well, if that were so——

"If that is so," Nina thought to herself, "if that is so——"

She felt somehow, though, that she had been a little ill bred herself in her loyalty to poor Angel. This made her look toward Evermore with an acute sense of injury, and their eyes clashed like weapons. She loosened her scarf a little, thoughtfully.

By that time she had thought of something to say to relieve the tension so willfully created by Zena, and she remarked into the silence of the hall:

"Do those dear canaries sing all winter?"

"Darling little beasties!" said Angel Lovell.

"They simply drown conversation," Zena replied gravely.

"I had a sweet little flat in Biarritz one winter," Mrs. Lovell babbled, "and I used to keep canaries."

"Dear Angel!" Nina thought. "How brave she is!"

The Lamberts were the next diversion, bringing in tea. It was a rite with them on Sunday afternoons, and they made a regular feast of it, for which culinary dainties secreted in Mrs. Lambert's brain flowered to perfection. During the dispensing of tea, every one talked of things extraneous to the undercurrents that seethed in Angel Lovell's mind, and she joined in sweetly. There was nothing else to do.

This girl, this sentimental-looking child, felt no interest in all that she could tell her! Or was she cleverly dissembling? Was she wise enough for that?

Angel Lovell was still trying to decide this when the talk broke, and she heard Zena say:

"Faux, I'm going to take Nina upstairs to show her the new cushions in my room. Mrs. Lovell, you don't

mind? You'll smoke a cigarette, won't you?"

The man and the woman whom the world had thought lovers were left alone in the hall. He handed her the cigarette box equably, and, taking one, she looked up at him with a long, full, questioning glance.

"How—kind—your wife is!" she murmured. "Has she left us on purpose?"

"On purpose for what?"

Angel Lovell leaned back, crossing her knees. Her short skirt displayed a generous length of most delicately turned ankles; her slim figure lay with a kind of seductive ease in the chair. She held her cigarette, poised, between two thin fingers.

"I don't want to smoke," she said, sighing.

She looked at him mysteriously.

He replied: "Well, don't smoke. Don't do violence to your inclinations. If you do, it would be the first time, wouldn't it?"

She sighed again and said:

"No. I did violence to them when I married Hugh Lovell."

"The old story *again!*" he said to himself.

It couldn't touch him. Nothing that she could do or say could ever touch him again. He was a little sorry for Lovell, though, who, in a way, hadn't been a bad sort, any more than Hart had.

Angel Lovell turned a little in her chair to look out into the gray twilight beyond the open window.

"What a lovely evening it's going to be! It's just like that evening when——"

Her eyes dropped to his hand lying on the arm of his chair, asking plainly: "Do you remember?"

Evermore almost felt that indented scar on the back of his brown hand. He remembered perfectly the evening she elected to memorize. They had

been together—in her stuffy, scented, minute sitting room, private to herself and her particular friend or friends of the moment. They had been by the desk on which he had seen—yes, at that very moment he had seen it—a sheet inscribed in Lady Nina's untidy hand. And Angel Hart had provoked him suddenly to kiss her as she sat before the desk. He had laid one hand on the desk and the other on the back of her chair, and had leaned down quickly——

And then the husband had intruded into the sitting room, which was not meant for his presence. He had carried a golf club, and it had crashed down on Evermore's hand on the chair back. It had broken a bone, down to which it had cut the flesh.

He could see Hart's white face ugly with rage, and hear Angel's angry scream, and feel himself standing up with a lust for fight rising in his blood and then sinking again at his fair realization of how matters stood, man to man. He had said:

"I'm sorry, Hart. It's what I would have done myself."

They had had a long, stupid talk in some hideous private room that Hart kept for his own. They had understood each other, and he had learned the travail of the husband's soul before they had parted. And Hart had rendered first aid to the broken hand himself.

Angel Lovell looked down at the scar, a tiny smile on her lips. It excited her. It was the nearest two men had ever come to a physical fight for her. The divorce courts provided an ugly, sordid, penalizing way of fighting; the fight there had been only bitter.

Evermore said:

"I remember quite well. Your husband was a good sort. I don't think you should have given him up for Lovell."

She emitted a husky sob.

"You made me. It was you."

"Nonsense!"

"You deserted me when I—I needed a friend."

"And you'd found one in poor Hugh Lovell."

"Poor? Poor! Oh!"

"I expect he's as big a brute as the rest of us now, isn't he?"

"I hate men!"

"Why don't you leave them alone, then?"

"I don't know if you realize how insulting you are."

"I only realize," said Evermore, "that at one time, when I was much attracted to you, I embarked on a—what is it called?—flirtation with you. But I didn't go very far. I disembarked pretty soon. I cut it out for two reasons—partly because I saw what you were going to do with me if I was fool enough to let you, but mostly because I don't queer another man's pitch. I'll fight him for it fair—that's all. I suppose that's my kind of morality. Heaven knows I'm not troubled with much!"

"I should like to be friends again."

"I feel awfully remiss in not taking what the gods seem inclined to send me."

"Again, I think you're insulting! No less!"

"Do you? I wonder exactly why you came down here."

"Because Nina was sweet enough to ask me to come and rest my tired mind in her dear cottage. She understands. She's sorry."

"You can compare your hatreds of men."

"I used to think at one time that you understood me——"

"You were right."

She was silent. Then:

"Does your wife know about—us?"

"What is there to know?"

"All that we were to one another."

"You were nothing to me. But I'm flattered if I may believe that I——"

"You weren't!"

"Well, then?"

That left her with nothing in hand. She murmured:

"What a long time they are upstairs!"

"I expect my wife wants to tell Lady Nina about a certain piece of news that has pleased her immensely. They are great friends, you know."

"I should like to be friends with her, too. She's sweet."

His eyes darted fire at her.

"Hands off!" he said roughly.

"Mayn't I know the piece of news, too?"

Evermore thought for a little while, strangely reluctant to tell her. But at last he said slowly:

"Very well. It'll do you good. You unnatural women——" He shuddered.

She regarded him with a faint astonishment.

"You—you've altered."

"Yes. Probably."

"But the news?"

"We're going to have a child."

She screamed faintly and affectedly.

"Heavens! I hope nothing so primitive will ever befall me!"

"It might save you from worse. That is an idea. I think I shall tell Lovell."

"Dreadful!" she said, making little mouths.

And he hated having told her, until he saw that the cigarette she was still holding was being pinched to bits between her fingers.

Was there really, within her, some faint cry?

Even as he wondered, with a little murmuring of talk and a swish of skirts, the other two women came down the stairs again. And Nina's harsh face was soft, and repentance was in her eyes.

She took Angel Lovell away rather abruptly, with a kind of insistence.

From the window Zena watched them go with a face of wonder. As they turned the corner from the house, as if feeling that her gaze followed them, the two women turned simultaneously to look back, and she waved to them friendly. She sat down on the window seat and Evermore came over to sit beside her; the *borsoi* paid his affectionate attentions alternately to each.

Evermore asked, rather humbly:

"Well, child, did you tell Medusa?" She nodded.

"And what did she say?"

"She—she was glad. And she suddenly seemed rather uneasy—poor Nina!—about Mrs. Lovell."

"Poor Nina!", he grumbled. "She ought to be hanged!"

Zena smoothed out with a finger tip the frown between his brows, and he saw her laughter ready.

"You—you *laugh*!" he exclaimed.

"Why not? It's sad—only—only it's funny, too."

"Thank God!" said Evermore devoutly after a pause.

"Did you think I was going to think otherwise, Harry—Faux?"

"Women," he stammered, "are so—so—such worrying creatures. They brood and remember and suspect."

She got up, went across to the hearth, and peered into the great round mirror that hung above. As if she knew quite well, without little vanities thereat, what God had given her, she smiled. She said, with the most innocent spark of devilry, like a charming child's mischief:

"Faux, don't you think I can compete?"

Evermore burst into laughter and, striding over to her, caught her in his arms and cried:

"Oh, you woman! You *woman*!"

"Besides, I feel supreme. I have the baby," she whispered.

"With or without, you are supreme."

"It's a little hard on you to be paying for another man's past indiscretions," said Zena, "but you're ready for that—we're both ready. You see why I can accept the situation so happily; why I could read that horrible newspaper story quite calmly. It hadn't anything to do, really, with us. You are you. I can always know that."

For the first time since the moment when he had spoken to her over her breakfast table at the Hotel Alexa, he was unready with a quick, false, acquiescent reply to that. It rose to his lips, but stayed there with a galling taste. And his soul asked him grievously: "How much longer will you be able to deceive her?"

Lady Nina and her cousin, walking home through the autumn dusk, were at first silent. It was Angel Lovell who spoke presently, in her huskiest, most droopy voice:

"Your little friend Zena is a perfectly sweet person. But it is a thousand pities——"

"I suppose so."

"I know him so well," said Angel, in a manner darker than the falling darkness about them.

"I would like to ask you, in future," Nina replied unexpectedly, "to know him rather less well."

"There's no need to be cruel."

"Exactly," said Lady Nina in her most strident platform voice. "That's my view entirely. There's nothing further for you to do about it. A circumstance has arisen——"

Mrs. Lovell uttered her small, affected scream.

"Oh, he told me *at once*—directly you left us alone."

"Did he indeed?"

"He never had any secrets from me,"

Angel Lovell sighed, "and I suppose he finds it hard to begin now."

"I wonder you are not ashamed to own it, Angel."

"There's no need to be cruel."

"Nor to use the same phrase twice in five minutes," replied Lady Nina. "To my mind, this circumstance alters the whole complexion of affairs."

"I don't quite understand how."

"Zena's friends must all stand by her. And it may be this man's salvation. Some one told me, a day or two ago, that he is actually taking up poor Harry's work in the East End. And Jack likes him immensely."

"You seem to have changed——"

"Angel," said Nina, "this afternoon I was surprised to feel myself more vulgar than I could have thought it possible for me to be. It was in the worst of taste for you to call upon Zena Evermore."

Angel Lovell stared into the dark.

"If you had ever loved," she cried deeply, "you would know that I can't give Faux Evermore up to satisfy a mere convention of good taste."

Lady Nina displayed a strange wisdom for a virgin nearly forty who has never experienced the tender emotion.

"If you'd ever loved any one better than yourself, Angel, you'd know enough to see that Faux Evermore, whatever your mutual past may be, feels the most utter indifference to you now."

"There's no need to be so cru——"

"Nor so tiresome," said Lady Nina. "I had my eyes opened this afternoon, for no reason that I can explain. I hate tiresome people, particularly as guests."

Angel Lovell preserved a furious, thoughtful silence. She didn't want to go back to Hugh just yet; her cousin's was the only country retreat open to her at the moment; and she had no money in her purse beyond enough for the servants' tips, for the last quarrel she had picked with her husband had been extremely bitter.

Faux had lots—and lots—of money, hadn't he? It was his wife's? What matter?

TO BE CONCLUDED IN THE DECEMBER NUMBER.



A GIRL SWIMMER

A GIRL'S thanks do I give to Him who made
The sea and brooks and springs and streams and wide,
Still lakes like this which now I stand beside,
Whose water puts out fingers unafraid
Of want of welcome, and touches—so—my white,
Warm foot, as if it very long had sought me.
Then, at my plunge, it clasps me, and delight
Is in me, which earth's touching never brought me.
Unheeding I frolic, over, under

Its spaciousness, its touch upon my eyes.

Then, hands and shoulders dripping whitely after,
Between the shining sands and shining skies,
New-born I stand, and view the world with wonder,
My prayer of thanks a burst of happy laughter.

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

"Showing" Trudie Renfrew

By Winifred Arnold

Author of "The Parlow Reunion," "The Parkin Plan in Marcella Street," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK BERNARD TURTON

Yes, Trudie was a matchmaker, but did two people succeed or not in "putting one over on her" in this brightly humorous tale?

I KNEW there was something in the wind the minute Trudie Renfrew sat down and began to remove her immaculate white gloves. Trudie has a way of pulling her gloves off her long, tapering fingers and smiling down at them with her head on one side that says a heap more plainly than words that she has a bombshell to drop in your midst.

"Well, what is it, Trudie?" I inquired brusquely. "Out with it, please."

Trudie's upturned face, with two white teeth showing in the circle of her rosebud lips, "registered" naïve surprise.

"Why, Edith," she exclaimed, "you wonderful little mind reader, you! How did you ever guess? But since you have—perhaps I— Tell me truly, dear, will you? Are you engaged to Dick Lapham—yet?"

"Yet!" I repeated with some asperity. "Your phrasing is anything but flattering, my dear Trudie. Is it your idea that I've been making an effort—"

"Good heavens, no!" ejaculated Trudie, throwing one bare hand and one unremoved white glove into the air with a despairing gesture. "Effort? I should say not! That's just the trouble. You don't make an effort about anything that's worth while—dancing or dress or men or anything like that! And you used to be so attractive! Do tell me, Edith, why are you letting yourself *just slump?*"

"Fortunately," I retorted, "I am in-

terested in things much better worth while. My painting——"

"Painting!" scoffed Trudie briskly. "Stuff and nonsense! There isn't anything better worth while for a woman than taking care of her looks and keeping up to date!"

And forthwith there followed such a disquisition upon those two vital subjects as Mrs. Robert Renfrew, I am reluctantly forced to admit, is singularly well qualified to give.

"Heaven knows I don't mean to be unkind," she ended piously, "but with you and Dick Lapham settling down like one of those pairs of patient lovers in a New England story, it's time for some interested friend to take a hand! Dines with you every Friday night, doesn't he, and always takes you to the Tuesday musicales and the private views? I thought so! And not even engaged!"

This time her hands rose only an inch or two before falling helplessly into her lap.

"Perhaps it never occurred to you that I don't care to be engaged to Dick!" I returned loftily, nobly choking back the information that Dick had celebrated every one of my birthdays from twenty-five to thirty with his annual proposal. "In spite of your up-to-date exterior, Trudie Renfrew, you are evidently one of those old-fashioned, sentimental feminine creatures to whom a woman's one end and aim in life is matrimony. Dick and I are very good friends, and that happens to

be all that I want of him. I'm a modern woman, my dear."

"You're not at all," contradicted Trudie. "A modern woman arranges her life without any regard to men at all. She keeps herself well groomed and well dressed and all that because she owes it to herself and her sex and her ideals of efficiency, while you——" She waved an expressive hand toward a coiffure whose greatest claim to distinction was the fact that it could be concocted in half a minute, and the strictly utilitarian garments that clothed, rather than adorned, my person. "You've thrown away your figure and your style and everything because, though you don't care to marry him, you've got Dick Lapham just where you want him, and that's all you care about."

Up to this time, I had sustained the cannonade with what I flattered myself was a most admirable lack of rancor, but this last charge was too much. Dick Lapham indeed!

"It's no such thing!" I retorted hotly.

"Just exactly like the type of woman who marries and settles down," pursued Trudie with infuriating calmness. "Got her man and doesn't make a bit more effort. Why didn't you dance last winter? Why don't you brush up your skating this? Because Dick doesn't; that's why. You used to be crazy about both of them and do them awfully well. And you're two years younger than I am and you weigh thirty pounds more—and in the wrong places, too! And *look* at your hair! Oh, Edith!"

Just then there arrived another caller—undoubtedly Heaven-sent at that precise moment. Had she been two seconds later, I will not guarantee that she might not have been greeted by the sight of her hostess forcibly evicting Mrs. Robert Renfrew with hands that were full of that lady's carefully waved and netted hair. The cave

woman, they say, sleeps in all of us; and mine, you must admit, had been hearing her rising bell for some little time.

Trudie stayed just long enough to lead the conversation tactfully to a discussion of "Angela's Business" and the curious modification of the Angela type to be found even among women who didn't care to marry, and then rose to go, with a pleasant consciousness of duty done radiating from every well-groomed inch of her.

My own radiations, I regret to say, were of no such delightful unity, being compounded of most violent opinions on "justifiable homicide" and most unwilling admiration of the trig swing of Trudie's skirt, the jaunty swirl of Trudie's furs, and the disgustingly lithe and youthful lines of Trudie's figure.

I'm sure no one who reads this—no woman, at least—will be surprised to learn that during the dragging moments of the perfectly tactful and agreeable call that followed, I merely existed, in a state of burning anxiety to hasten to my pier glass and see if I should confront so dreadful a spectacle as the one sketched by the altogether tactless and disagreeable Trudie.

When I finally did—well, suffice it to say that I was properly overwhelmed with regrets that I had not urged the amiable one to stay longer—all the afternoon, in fact—possibly to dinner or even for the week-end!

My wrath, of course, was almost equally divided between the guilty Trudie and the innocent mirror, which had been consistently presenting the same picture every morning to my blindly unobservant glance.

Let the woman who looks at herself in the mirror as keenly as if she were a perfectly strange female who has just moved in next door throw the first stone at me.

Then I reverted to Trudie's absolutely inexcusable remarks about Dick

Lapham, and the whole volume of my wrath gravitated to the exact spot where it belonged.

Dick Lapham indeed! I cared about nothing else—clothes nor figure nor fun—just because I was sure of Dick Lapham! I would *show* Trudie Renfrew!

And with curious feminine logic, I decided—as no doubt the astute Trudie had intended I should—that the way to "show" her was to make myself over on the prescribed lines and keep Dick and his equable friendship, too. It was, after all, three years and a half since he had ceased to make the annual offer of something warmer.

The first steps of feminine self-improvement are so well trod that the wayfaring woman—though a fool—could not err therein. They lead as naturally from the hairdresser to the masseuse, to the corsetière, to the dressmaker as addition leads to subtraction, subtraction to multiplication, multiplication to tears!

Then — if you really mean it—comes the time of diet and exercise—of intimate communings with the owner of "The Perfect Figure" or the lady who assures you that "You Can Be So Well!" And you roll around on the floor like a peculiarly humble door-mat and perform weird

contortions; after which, you gaze with famished eyes at viands like cold potatoes or icy buttered toast.

It was certainly hard—the hardest thing I had done in years. But wounded vanity is a great pacemaker, and with one eye out for Trudie Renfrew and one for that creature in my mirror, I pegged away like a Trojan.

There was also a redeeming feature in the fact that the resurrected skates felt like newly recovered wings, and that there, at least, I could give "cards and spades" to Trudie, who had always been an unaccountably poor skater.



"And you used to be so attractive! Do tell me, Edith, why are you letting yourself just slump?"

FREDERICK HERWARD TURTON

Then came the day when Tom Barber flew across the rink with the cry of "Bless my soul, if it isn't the same old Edith! What have you been doing with yourself all these years?" and insisted on skating with me all the evening. He begged for the next evening, too, but there I was adamant. That was Dick's regular Friday, and certainly loyal old Dick was not to be disappointed for any Tom Barber! They two had been rivals in those gay and giddy twenties of mine, and Tom, at least, had been most unflatteringly able to forget it.

Nevertheless, I found myself gazing rather critically at good old Dick as we sat vis-à-vis in my little dining room. Dick certainly had acquired a stoop—or was it rather what Trudie called a "slump?"—and his hair was thinning noticeably, and his dinner coat had all too evidently been made in the days when his figure had been several thoughts slenderer. His conversation, too, was, to say the least, middle-aged, and he never once commented on the change in my appearance, though by this time anybody, even that eagle-eyed ogre in my mirror, could see that it was immensely improved.

"Oh, Dick," said I, heroically nibbling at a Triscuit while my guest devoured a delicious dessert with a gusto that made me positively ravenous, "oh, Dick, why don't you get out your skates and come skating again this winter? I'm trying it, and it's great sport."

Dick smiled lazily.

"Me!" he retorted. "Hazarding my aging bones on a glare of ice once more—no, indeed! When a man gets in the neighborhood of forty—" He shook his head with a timely tolerance for the amusements of youth. "How do you happen to be getting so gay, Edith? Seems to me Sister Ellen said something about seeing you at a dance recently. Can it be possible that a sensible woman like you—"

But before he could finish, I had launched forth into a dissertation on the necessity of keeping yourself up to date, physically, mentally, and socially, that Trudie Renfrew would undoubtedly have paid much good money to hear.

Dick, however, remained genially unmoved.

"Great Scott, Edith," he drawled, "what in the world is there that's worth all that effort? I thought you and I were agreed that the best thing in life is to be comfortable and—"

"And settle down in a rut," I snapped, "get to be old before our time—"

"For the love of Heaven, Edith!" gasped Dick, dropping his after-dinner cigar in his dismay and scattering ashes all over the living-room rug as he fumbled for it. "That's been Ellen's cry for years, now! Is this haven of refuge lost to me, too? By Jove, Edith, you have changed yourself, haven't you? Funny I hadn't noticed it before." He sat up and regarded me with the eyes of a man just awakened from sleep.

Upon this interesting scene entered Tom Barber, so full of ingenuous surprise at finding me engaged, and of shocked regret over his intrusion, that he would have deceived the very elect. He had just dropped in, he explained naïvely, to see if I wouldn't care to go and skate.

"Go ahead, Edith. Don't mind me. I really ought to go around to the club and see Donnelly," said Dick, rising at once like the gentleman he is.

It was with the curious sense of seeing the hands of the clock fly back that I pushed the politely departing Dick into his chair again and offered another seat to the impudently smiling Tom.

It was just so that, years ago, I had dispensed even-handed justice between them; and just so that Tom had turned

defeat into victory by remaining and leading the conversation in a way that redounded to his own glory.

Dick, however, had ceased to sulk over such a turn of affairs. Instead, he settled back comfortably on the end of his spine and smoked, with placid, but appreciative guffaws for all Tom's witticisms. And I couldn't help noticing again how dreadfully his coat fitted. It was all the more evident because Tom still looked like a men's-clothing advertisement.

The next Friday night, it was Trudie who interrupted—Trudie, with her husband and a visiting man from New York. He had brought a new step with him, and before I could catch my breath, my masterful friend had affixed a suitable record to the Victrola and was having the New York man give me a lesson, with herself and Bob as humble imitators. Dick, of course, was told off to run the Victrola.

"What's the use of hopping around like that when you can sit still and be comfortable?" he had demanded jovially when Bob had politely offered to let him have a turn under Trudie's expert tutelage.

So there he sat in a morris chair by the Victrola and changed records, with a tolerant, but bored smile for our youthful follies.

"All he needs is a bath robe and a pair of carpet slippers to make the picture complete," scoffed Trudie in my ear as she bade me good night. "Thank heavens, Edith, we've waked you up so that you don't think comfort is the only thing in life! And now listen—next Friday night you can't ask him to dinner at all. I'm going to give a dinner dance myself for the Mackintoshes and I expect you to be the belle of the ball."

I wasn't, of course—though Trudie Renfrew is wise enough not to mix in débutantes with what she tactfully calls her "full-bloom parties"—but I did

have a good time, and knowing the new steps certainly helped a lot. It was the first time I'd gone to anything big in a long time, but the old crowd seemed glad to welcome me back, and with Tom Barber and the New York man to look out for me, I got on very well indeed; so well, in fact, that I forgot all about the concert for the next Tuesday evening and accepted the New York man's invitation to a little dinner for six at the Cherokee.

Dick was very philosophic about it, however, when he drifted in with the tickets Sunday afternoon. We'd taken the concertgoing so for granted for a long time now that he hadn't thought to speak about this one before.

"Oh, well," he said resignedly, "I'll take Ellen if she hasn't got anything better on. You'd probably want to get up and caper between numbers, and I couldn't qualify as a partner. I like to have my entertaining done for me, you know. Besides, Ellen will have to put up with my new business suit, and a gay young butterfly like you might demand a new dress coat."

Of course one likes not to disappoint one's friends, but certainly Dick was carrying this philosophy business a little far.

"Yes," I returned, with a touch of natural resentment in my voice, "or that you should train off enough of your superfluous pounds so that you could wear your old one decently."

Dick whistled softly.

"Gee, Edith, but this is no place for a placid man!" he breathed, with his usual good-humored smile curving his lips. "Well, I'm afraid my tailor can't get a new Tuxedo ready before next Friday. Is it permitted to wear one's Sunday togs, or shall I just stay away again?"

"Don't be silly, Dick!" I retorted. "Of course you can get something by that time. Trudie says I must do something for her New York man—he's do-



"Great Scott, Edith," he drawled, "what in the world is there that's worth all that effort? I thought you and I were agreed that the best thing in life is to be comfortable and——"

ing some efficiency business for Bob's firm—and Friday's the only free time he has for a week; so I'm going to have just a little dinner for eight—you, of course, and I think Tom Barber for the fourth man. Don't look disgruntled. I'll have auction afterward just on your account—as you're not strong on 'hopping about,' as you term it."

But in these days he is the wise host who doesn't reckon without his guests.

Tom Barber, who had no idea of being outdone by any New York man, had acquired a particularly fetching new step from somewhere, and no mere card tables were going to prevent him from showing it off. With one swoop he waved them aside, started the Victrola, with nonchalant orders to Dick to "keep it going, old man," and was giving an exhibition with Trudie before I could say "Jack Robinson."

Then young Sid Barber "just happened" to stroll in—trust Tom for arranging all the details—and by that time the card tables had been wafted out into the dining room and apparently effaced as completely from everybody's mind as they were from sight.

"Never mind, Dicky," I whispered breathlessly, as I dropped down beside him after a particularly lively "trot" with young Sid. "Next Wednesday there's a private view at the gallery and you shall come home with me after it and have a nice, comfy, tête-à-tête dinner. Wear a smoking jacket and carpet slippers, if you like, and do nothing more strenuous than keep your pipe going all the evening, with your feet on the fender."

Dick's smile was skeptical.

"It sounds well," he returned quizzically, "very well indeed, but what if some of your active little playmates drop in, Edith, my dear? Good old Uncle Dick's armchair would be yanked away from the fender, and he'd have to look alive or his carpet slippers would be trodden on by many an agile foot. Besides—I happen to be going out of town on a business trip, so I couldn't come anyway, thank you. Great Scott, I've got to sprint now! My train leaves at twelve-thirty."

And that, if you'll believe it, was the last I saw of Dick Lapham for three long and—dare I admit it?—weary months. He seemed to be always off on business trips somewhere, and though there were usually telephone calls between them, he never could manage to come to dine in the same old way. "Awfully busy," or, "Absolutely fagged out," he'd say with regretful politeness; and when he suggested calling, it was always when there was some big thing on that I just had to go to.

At first I didn't miss the old intimacy so much, for the giddy whirl is heaps of fun, particularly after a few years' hiatus like mine; and no woman

in her thirties could help enjoying the feeling of renewing her youth and whistling back to heel an old suitor who had been chasing débutantes for years.

Of course it was about time for Tom Barber to have a relapse from buds and no particular credit to me, but I enjoyed the "rush," all the same, and played him off against the New York man with some skill.

In the midst of my fling, however, I suddenly recalled just how many months it was since I had seen Dick Lapham, and those months began to seem as I said before—both long and weary. No wonder he was too busy or too tired to come when I deigned to invite him. What a perfectly horrid time I had given him on those last few Friday evenings of ours! I had deliberately allowed just the things he didn't enjoy and then expected him to want to come again. And the things he must have been hearing about me on his last visits home! No wonder he had wiped me off his slate altogether.

And suddenly I knew what the astute Trudie had told me months before—that the one thing I really wanted in this wide world was to be on Dick Lapham's slate, in what capacity it mattered little—"patient lover," or old family friend, or something I had refused six consecutive years to consider. At any rate I had to be *on*! And even though Trudie Renfrew had handed me the sponge that had wiped me out, I was honest enough to admit that I had done the sponging myself.

But when I finally got through hating myself, I began to concentrate on Trudie Renfrew. And having gained considerable momentum in that line, I did a very thorough job.

With that fine feminine logic which has always characterized me, I decided at once on the most successful punishment I could mete out to that erring lady and all the other erring people

who had helped me have such a gay and jolly winter—without Dick. Trudie was giving a garden party that evening out at the country club—the first garden party of the season and one for which I had acquired the most dazzling “creation” I could afford.

Instead of arraying myself in that creation, I would stay at home, wrap myself in the most hideous gown of my previous incarnation, and be just as miserable as I could. That, I felt, was the only way in which I could get really even with the world at large.

By eight o'clock I was sobbing dismally on the arm of the morris chair, when I was startled by a sudden voice from the hall.

“I'll go right in and wait, Marie.”
“You're sure she hasn't gone yet?”

Just for the moment, I thought it was a voice from the spirit realm and then I looked up and knew it wasn't—for there he stood in the flesh, good old Dick! And yet curiously unlike good old Dick, too. Could it be possible that Dick had a younger brother—handsome, well set up, and groomed and dressed till he made Tom Barber look like a mannikin from a Bowery store? But no—certainly no younger brother would have dashed across that room and swooped me up in his arms the way he did; and *certainly* upon no younger brother's shoulder would I have allowed myself to weep and be soothed and petted and kissed to the extent that I was.

Of course it was all settled in that first minute; then we stood back and regarded each other at arms' length.

“What in the world have you been doing with yourself?” I demanded.

“And what have *you* been doing with *yourself*?” retorted Dick quizzically. “I came to escort the ‘most chic young woman’ in town to Mrs. Robert Renfrew's garden party, and behold what I find! I might as well have worn that

good old Tuxedo that you scoffed at—or even the smoking jacket.”

“I'll explain after you do,” I replied firmly. “What has changed the good old champion of ‘comfort first’ into this modern Beau Brummel?”

Beau Brummel grinned—a grin composed of one-third sheepishness and two-thirds pride and triumph.

“You have,” he returned briefly. “Suppose I was going to let Tom Barber cut me out again after all these years? Not without a struggle, believe me! I've been in the hands of experts for these three months. They've got me what I wanted without even having to turn on the dancing attachment.”

“You—precious—old goose!” I ejaculated, with suitable punctuations. “Did you think you had got to make yourself over to please me? Why, Dicky, old man, I was so homesick for you I'd have taken you even in the carpet slippers! I thought Trudie Renfrew had made me lose you entirely.”

“And of course I saw that Trudie Renfrew was trying to snatch you away from me!” retorted Dick. “That was one reason why it's such a good joke to beat her at her own game. Of course there can't be anything equal to this, darling, but don't you think it would be rather sport to go out and knock the wind out of Trudie's sails by announcing our engagement at her own party? She doesn't even know I'm going to be there. I got the invitation through Bob on the strict Q. T.”

“Fine!” I agreed heartily, and in less than an hour we were standing before our smiling hostess, with Dick's mother's pearl ring gleaming meaningly on my deliberately bared hand.

“Well, thank Heaven! *At last!*” exclaimed our Trudie crisply. “I've never had so much trouble with anybody as I have with you two! If that last play of mine had fallen down, I shouldn't have known *what* to do. *Now* I shall dare to begin on Tom Barber!”

Minor Skin Disorders

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

THE health and beauty of the skin may be disturbed by a number of causes—constitutional, local, acquired. Heredity, too, has a great deal to do with the character of this marvelous organ, but fortunately we can do much to overcome gross inheritances by correct living. Here, as nowhere else in the body, is the essence of hygienic rules applicable—*cleanliness*; cleanliness of the outer and even more of the inner skin, since the entire alimentary tract is an infolding of the outer covering. The consideration of any skin affection must include the condition of this tract; unless the teeth, mouth, throat, stomach, and intestines are in a state of absolute cleanliness, the skin cannot retain its normal “flesh” color. Even though it changes from the delicate pink of babyhood to the coloring characteristic of individual adult types, it always retains a distinct “flesh” tint if a state of absolute bodily cleanliness has been the habit of one’s life. When the general hue of the skin is chronically bad, it can be attributed to the circulation in the blood of effete matter which should have been eliminated through the natural channels.

The skin itself carries off considerable waste. Daily scrubbing of the skin increases its activity and aids materially in this process. When a sluggish condition of the liver and the intestinal

tract is allowed to develop, the skin becomes tintured with the poisonous gases and noxious odors with which the body is saturated. This constitutes one of its most common minor troubles—*muddiness*, as it is termed.

In brunettes, a swarthinness accompanied by an oversecretion of the oil and sweat glands is very apt to become embarrassingly disfiguring unless constant attention is given to maintaining the liver and the intestinal tract in a healthy active condition.* With torpidity of the liver, the skin and the whites of the eyes become yellow—a chronic state in some persons. The breath is also unpleasantly affected. Next to cleanliness and free elimination of waste by means of saline waters and vegetable laxatives, diet and exercise are important. Those so afflicted—for a deeply tintured skin, with its accompanying distressing “showing,” is an affliction—must give up starches and sugars and indulge in little animal food. Walking and horseback riding are ideal exercises. Jaundice might well be included here, as many persons with a habitually feebly acting liver go through life chronically steeped in bile. The subject of the liver, however, is daily growing in significance, being, as it is, the

*The name of a tonic laxative will gladly be furnished those interested.

largest gland in the body, so we will leave such skin conditions as arise specifically from disorders of this important organ for a later article.

Of all the skin affections that plague and scourge us, *eczema* is the most troublesome. It cannot be termed a minor skin affection except in the sense that it does not destroy life, but it is the most frequent or "popular" disease of the epidermis, as it includes about two-thirds of all those who suffer from skin disorders. Viewed from the standpoint of beauty, it is perhaps as important as any other skin complaint, while it interferes markedly with the general health; indeed it is very often an expression of some underlying constitutional affection. It may, however, be purely local. Eczema is usually regarded as a reaction of the skin against some irritant which may have its origin within or without.

As is well known, atmospheric conditions have a strong influence upon the skin; this is especially the case in eczema. With comparatively few exceptions, it is most common and much worse in windy winter weather. Heat and cold, sharp, biting winds, the excessive use of water, strong soaps, dyes, and chemical irritants are among the external causes that may give rise to this extremely unpleasant and annoying affection.

There is a growing belief that eczema is parasitic in origin. Dermatologists are not all agreed on this, although all state emphatically that it is not contagious, which is contrary to popular belief.

Just as persons of dark complexion are more prone to discolorations of the skin, so those of light complexion and hair are more liable to eczematous conditions. In no affection is there so great a diversity. Eczema may be acute in one whose skin is sensitive to an external irritant—the application of a drug like sulphur, for instance. It may

disappear spontaneously if the drug is discontinued, or it may go on and become chronic, changing its character during the process.

Thus, it begins as a simple redness of the skin, which may become moist and finally dry and thickened. In some cases, the outbreak is in the form of little pimples, pustules, or water blisters on a reddened surface, with much smarting, burning, and itching. Eczema, because of its manifold varieties, is not always recognized; it has, however, one invariable symptom, and that is itching, which is often intolerable. When it appears on the face, it may spread out and attack the eye. It is sometimes confined to the nose and gives rise to "rosacea" or chronic red nose.

When eczema makes its appearance, every effort should be made to cut short the attack with all possible speed. Certain foods and drinks must be avoided by all sufferers; these are strong tea and coffee, alcoholic fluids, pork, cheese, and shellfish. Rest, sleep, bathing, suitable clothing, good air, regular exercise, and sunshine will assist in the treatment. Laxatives must never be overlooked, and the diet, during an attack, should be of the blandest.

A well-known skin specialist advises a diet confined to rice and milk for five days, with the gradual addition of other bland foods. Locally, acute eczema is best treated by bland applications, of which the following is an excellent example:

Oxide of zinc	4 drams
Spirit of camphor	1 dram
Glycerin	1 ounce
Rose water	2 ounces
Lime water	3 ounces

In the moist variety, dry powders are more effective. A valuable one is composed of:

Powdered arrowroot	1 ounce
Powdered oleate of zinc	2 drams
Powdered camphor	½ dram

It is good practice to apply first a soothing ointment which makes the powder more adherent to the skin.

Chronic eczema is often an expression of an underlying condition such as dyspepsia, rheumatism, gout, and so forth. While it is more common in males, many women suffer intolerably during the readjusting years. The "flushing" so common at the change of life becomes worse and ends in an eczema sometimes of the scalp, which spreads over the face, and often of other portions of the body. For this condition, there is no remedy like ichthyol, used both internally and as an ointment.

In old people, chronic eczema is very common. The affection, in Macbeth's phrase, "murders sleep," and often requires an opiate to give the wretched sufferer a brief "surcease." In the chronic forms, vapor baths, plain or medicated, soften the skin, relieve the itching, and are of great assistance to other remedies employed. Medicated soaps are useful. Tar is excellent. Itching may be lessened by using compound tincture of benzoin, lotions containing camphor, carbolic acid, and the like.*

Ringworm is a common name for a great number of skin affections, and is often mistaken for eczema, especially when it attacks the body. It appears as

small, scaly, round spots, slightly raised, running into one another to form concentric rings, which may disappear in the summer and reappear in the winter. In a chronic state, the spots lose their ringlike appearance and become patchy, red or brownish in color, and covered with scales. The face, neck, back of the hands, arms, body, even the nails, may be attacked.

Now ringworm is highly contagious, being a parasitic disorder. It is frequently mistaken for eczema, which accounts for the popular belief that eczema is contagious. When the nails are invaded by the parasite, they become dry, thick, brittle, and crack or separate in layers.

Free use of water upon the site of ringworm must be avoided, as it promotes the growth of the parasite and so counteracts the effect of any cura-

tive measures. Pure oleate of copper has the power of destroying the ringworm parasite; therefore, the following ointment is remedial:

Boric acid	30 grains
Oleate of copper	24 grains
Lanolin	½ ounce

If this does not prove strong enough, the amount of oleate of copper should be increased.

When ringworm attacks the scalp, it often spreads through families, schools, "homes," and so forth; for which reason it is highly essential that the sufferer should be as far as possible isolated from companionship.



Always apply soothing ointments.

*Information concerning a special eczema cure of a noted skin specialist is available to readers of this department.

If taken early, it can be cured by sponging the spot daily with a solution of borax and alcohol and then anointing with a mixture of ten grains of thymol to one ounce of olive oil. In a few days, a fifty per cent solution of boroglyceride should be added to this mixture. No water whatever must touch the spot. If this treatment is not efficacious, the oleate of copper ointment



A magnifying glass is helpful.

must be resorted to, and rubbed well into the spot night and morning. As a precaution against the spread of ringworm all articles used in its treatment, as well as combs, brushes, and so forth, should be burned.

Some persons suffer from chronic patchy ringworm of the body all their lives and do not know what it is. Itching is slight unless the eruption be irritated by the character of the under-clothing worn, by heat, and by uncleanness. In adults, especially males, ringworm of the upper thighs may break out regularly every winter; favored by heat and moisture it develops rapidly and soon loses its ordinary appearance, becomes inflammatory, and resembles a true eczema. Indeed, it is

called "*eczema marginatum*" in this situation, but the microscope reveals its true character. Carbolic acid—five to ten grains to an ounce of water or lard—a saturated solution of boric acid, ointments of tar, sulphur, tincture of iodine, are all helpful. A lotion of corrosive sublimate, one to four grains to the ounce, may be used in tincture of myrrh or benzoin and painted on the parts twice or thrice daily. Care in the selection of underwear should be observed by those with a susceptible skin, all colored and heavy, coarse weaves being avoided.

Seborrhea or *scurf*—a form of dandruff of the body—is more annoying to women, perhaps, than any other ordinary cutaneous eruption, because in them it occurs more often upon the parts exposed to observation, the face, chest, and back. Men are more prone than women to dandruff of the scalp.

This affection tends to become chronic and at times breaks out acutely, itching and burning intensely. When occurring on the forehead, nose, and cheeks, it is particularly annoying, especially if the scales assume a color different from that of the surrounding skin, which is not uncommon; indeed the scales may be yellowish, greenish, brownish, even black, adhering closely to the skin.

Seborrhea of the face and body is distinctly curable when constitutional tonic treatment is combined with local measures. Although the view that dandruff in any situation is parasitic and contagious is steadily gaining ground in dermatology, nevertheless it responds so favorably to constitutional treatment that impoverishment of the blood—due to general debility, anæmic, chlorosis, dyspepsia, and similar conditions, common in the female sex—must still be regarded as largely instrumental in causing the trouble. So a cure can confidently be predicted if the laws of hygiene so frequently referred to in

these papers are rigidly obeyed—laxatives, the blood enriched by a suitable diet and, if needed, an iron tonic, exercises in the open air, bathing, and so forth.

Locally, the treatment depends on the variety. If dry and scaly, an ointment should be used; when greasy, an alcoholic solution is preferable. Resorcin has been found of especial value in seborrhea, although sulphur, salicylic acid, and carbolic acid are all remedial. Every skin is a law unto itself. Some cannot tolerate sulphur, its mere presence causing an eczematous eruption; others reject everything else and respond at once to sulphur. Petrolatum, alone or with ten to twenty per cent of lanolin, forms a very satisfactory base for any of these remedies. For instance, combine thirty grains of resorcin or of sulphur with one-half ounce each of petrolatum and lanolin, or ten to twenty grains of salicylic acid with the same base.

An aqueous solution for a heavily scaled, greasy skin might consist of:

Carbolic acid	10 to 20 grains
Glycerin	30 minims
Resorcin	30 grains
Water	3 ounces

Before applying this, the scales must be removed with olive oil. When sulphur is well borne, a heavy lather of sulphur soap is often all that is required. The lather should be allowed to remain on during sleep, then washed off in the morning with tepid water, and a medicated lotion or powder used.

Small blisters are liable to attack persons with a delicate skin. They are frequently an expression of a run-down system, or they may follow the ingestion of certain foods. Thus, some persons invariably observe an eruption of small blisters at the angle of the mouth after eating strawberries; others cannot eat crabs or any shellfish whatsoever for the same reason. Little blisters in this situation are so common in pneu-

monia, ague, and cerebro-spinal fever as to have diagnostic value. They make their appearance with unfailing regularity in some individuals with every cold, when they are commonly called "cold sores," or with feverish conditions, when they are referred to as "fever blisters." While developing, these little pests give rise to a good deal of annoyance, not only because of their unsightliness, but because of the burning and itching to which they give rise. Although appearing most frequently at the angle of the mouth, they break out anywhere, even in the mouth. They usually last a week.

Now this type of "herpes"—the technical term for the eruption—is very mild and is never followed by any complication. These little aggregations of blisters run their course and disappear. Touched with alcohol, a solution of camphor, or oxide of zinc, or dusted with a cooling powder such as fine Peruvian bark, they are very apt to dry out and vanish in a few days.

But there is another form of herpes—shingles—which usually follows the course of a nerve, most frequently one of the intercostal nerves. Sometimes the eruption runs completely around the body, forming a girdle of blisters.

Shingles may also appear upon any part of the body. It causes serious inflammation when on the eye, and may even prove fatal when in that region. The pain of herpes is frequently very severe indeed, necessitating the use of anodynes. For an ordinary case of shingles, rest, with good, nourishing food and perhaps a tonic such as maltine, with appropriate local treatment, will suffice. The eruption should be washed with a solution of boric acid and covered with the following paste:

Boric acid	15 grains
Oxide of zinc	30 grains
Powdered starch	30 grains
Lanolin	90 grains
Rose-water ointment	150 grains

After applying the paste, bind over it a thick layer of absorbent cotton.

The skin harbors much living microscopic matter; it has its fauna as well as its flora. The animal parasite that causes so common an affection as scabies can be detected with the naked eye. Happily the self-respecting person of to-day needs no data upon so self-evident a condition as the "itch," but because of the extreme sensitiveness of the skin, and the rapidity with which it absorbs poisonous matter—toxines, bacteria, parasites, and the like—cuts, abrasions, and all foreign matters such as splinters or thorns, should immediately be examined and treated under a magnifying glass.

The outer covering of the body is not

generally understood to be one of its organs, yet it is, and it bears the same relation to the kidneys and lungs that the brain does to the nerves, or the heart to the blood vessels. A healthy skin is essential to the health and necessary to the beauty of the body.

Besides the bath and such internal measures as have been outlined above, the health of the skin can be promoted by means of daily massage, either with the hands, or with a glove consisting of a rubber base with seven wooden rotating balls, or by dry friction with coarse luffa mitts. Oil may be used if the skin is dry, although dry friction promotes the activity of the oil glands and improves the circulation, thus restoring the health and beauty of the skin.

Answers to Queries

MRS. EMMA W.—The gray-hair restorer so frequently alluded to in these pages is not on sale anywhere. The formula and directions for making are available to all readers complying with the rules of the department.

JOHN MARSDEN.—I am sorry you have so much difficulty in obtaining pine tar, one of the ingredients in the gray-hair restorer. It scarcely seems possible that a druggist could have been serious in suggesting roof tar. Send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and I will give you the name of a firm that supplies it at a small cost.

HARTFORD.—Much as I should like to gratify you, it is not possible for me to recommend the nostrum you mention as a "cure" for eczema. There are many remedies in use for this condition, depending on the variety—whether dry, moist, oily, and so forth. In a future article on "Minor Skin Affections," I shall enter quite fully into this trouble. Meanwhile, it will give me pleasure to suggest a remedy, on receiving from you a description of your condition.

ESTHER J.—Orris root is a very important substance used in perfumery products. There are two principal kinds, Florentine and Verona, the former being preferred. It is generally employed in the granulated form, or

about No. 40 powder, for sachet powders. This form is also suitable for making tinctures to use in handkerchief perfumes and toilet powder.

MENTOR.—Yes, I mentioned so-called French massage and liquid enamels as being misnomers, there being no such thing as a face enamel. However, when expertly made, they are great beautifiers, and I will gladly send the formula if you wish.

MADAME.—You do not state the nature of the astringent you wish. An astringent wash for the face? A lotion for general external application? Astringents are used in such variety and for so many purposes that I am completely at sea. Here is a very simple astringent wash for the face:

Boracic acid	1 dram
Alcohol	1 ounce
Rose water	2 ounces

MOTHER.—The following is an extremely good nursery powder; it also makes an excellent body powder for general household use in hot weather or when occasion demands:

Fuller's earth	6 ounces
Cornstarch	6 ounces
Talcum	2 ounces
Boric acid, powder.....	1 ounce

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.



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Quickly transforms the flabby flesh, toneless tissues, and pallid cheeks of weak, anaemic men and women into a perfect glow of health and beauty—Often increases the strength of delicate, nervous, run-down folks 100 per cent in two weeks' time.

IT is conservatively estimated that over three million people annually in this country alone are taking Nuxated Iron. Such astonishing results have been reported from its use both by doctors and laymen, that a number of physicians in various parts of the country have been asked to explain why they prescribe it so extensively, and why it apparently produces so much better results than were obtained from the old forms of inorganic iron.

Extracts from some of the letters received are given below:

Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York physician and Medical Author, says: "There can be no strong iron men without iron."

Pallor means anaemia. Anaemia means iron deficiency. The skin of anaemic men and women is pale. The flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone, the brain fags and the memory fails and they often become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks. In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, candies, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degenerated cornmeal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste-pipe the water in which our vegetables are cooked are responsible for another grave loss.

Therefore, if you wish to get the most strength out of what you eat, you must supply the iron deficiency in your food by using some form of organic iron, just as you would use salt when your food has not enough salt.

Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston Physician who has studied both in this country and in great European Medical Institutions says: "As I have said a hundred times over, organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders."

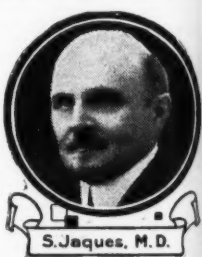
"If people would only take Nuxated Iron when they feel weak or run-down, instead of dosing themselves with habit-forming drugs, stimulants and alcoholic beverages I am convinced that in this way they could ward off disease, preventing it becoming organic in thousands of cases and thereby the lives of thousands might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, kidney, liver, heart trouble and other dangerous maladies. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood."



Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly-looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron.

If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary Nuxated Iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time, simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this, after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate, or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the fray; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron."

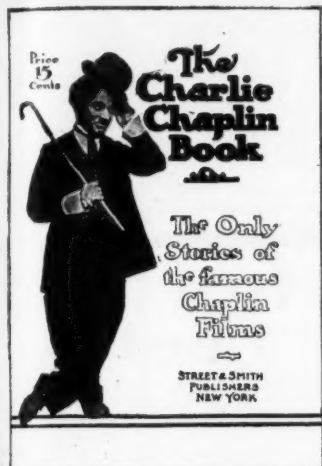
Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."



NOTE—Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit \$100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 100 per cent, or over in four weeks' time provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

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There has been lots of trash published about this funniest of all comedians, but the Charlie Chaplin Book (authorized and copyrighted) is the only one which deals with Mr. Chaplin's best work. It contains all of the side-splitting comedies in which this artist has appeared for the Essanay Company, in interesting, well-written story form.

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If you have entire or partial baldness, alopecia areata (bald spots), barbers' itch, dandruff, dry scalp, brittle hair, falling hair, if you get a lot of hair on your comb whenever you use it, itching scalp, or other hair or scalp trouble, try Koskott.

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